TEN CENTS A COPY

Our Comic Heritage, by Constance Rourke, on page 678

The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

VOLUME VII | NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1931 | NUMBER 35

Drawing by H. Charles Tomlinson for "Out of Soundings"

Sense and Sensitivity

OUT OF SOUNDINGS. By H. M. TOMLINSON. With drawings by H. CHARLES TOMLINSON. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1931. $4.

Reviewed by JOHN ARCHER GEE

IN this altogether admirable book, the tenth major volume in that noble line beginning with "The Sea and the Jungle" in 1912, are sixteen essays written over a period of several years. The last collection of this sort, "Gifts of Fortune," appeared as long ago as 1926. Yet the interval has not been barren, to say the least, for, in addition to giving us "Gallions Reach" and "All Our Yesterdays," Mr. Tomlinson has contributed a number of essays to various periodicals. Five essays, too, have appeared separately in book form: "A Brown Owl," "Côte d'Or," "One January Morning," "A Footnote to the War Books," and "Between the Lines." The first four of these are reprinted here, with some revision, and alone more than justify the increasingly high reputation of their author. Few essays in English excel "Côte d'Or" and that tribute to Thomas Hardy which, first printed the *Saturday Review* as "Hardy at Max Gate" and now called "One January Morning," fittingly closes, with an exalted final paragraph, this collection. Here is Mr. Tomlinson at his best—which is saying a very great deal.

There is much to be enthusiastic about in this volume. Several of the essays recall the older books. "The Wreck," for instance, might have been a notable part of "Old Junk"; "Gilolo," an account of a journey from Ternate to a nearby island, brings back the geographical and incorporeal bearings of "Tidemarks." There is, too, an evaluation of Drake and other Elizabethan voyagers, and, again, of exploration itself. The talkies are collocated with Marie Lloyd, airplanes with a veteran of the Crimea and petrol with a lost wood in Surrey. A delightful interlude also greets us in which Mr. Tomlinson narrates a Chaplinesque experience with skis in Switzerland. (The purser of the "Capella" on skis!) One need not continue. For it is not, of course, what Mr. Tomlinson discusses that counts, but what he infuses into the discussion. These things the reader must discover for himself. They are not unapt to be, as the author would say with that ironic, often negative understatement of his, somewhat elusive.

Here, as before, are islands and butterflies and ships. Right honorable gentlemen are here, and

(*Continued on next page*)

The School of Cruelty

By HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

IN the powerful and distressing "Sanctuary"* of William Faulkner, anti-romance reaches its limit. The plodding naturalism of Dreiser was merely evidence that the world was dingy, which the imaginative could disregard, the harsh staccato of Hemingway had sentiment as an undertone, Lewis's satire was at least based upon idealism. But this Mississippi writer (land of white columns draped in roses!) gives no quarter and leaves no field of the emotions unblighted. Others have written of the underworld and made it sinister, but in this story the underworld is less despicable than the frivolous creatures who descend into it. Others have done, and overdone, the trivial gin-drinking generation and the thin, hysterical debauchery of college youth, but with scorn, pity, or a secret admiration. Mr. Faulkner has come out at the further end of both Puritanism and anti-Puritanism, and in the dry light of complete objectivity weighs his subjects for their pound or ounce of life with no predilection for "ought," no interest in "why," and no concern for significance. He is cruel with a cool and interested cruelty, he hates his Mississippi and his Memphis and all their works, with a hatred that is neither passionate nor the result of thwarting, but calm, reasoned, and complete.

Unlike his fellow workers in the sadistic school, Mr. Faulkner can make character. His Popeye, the gunman, an impotent defective, without emotions and unaware of morality, is the most convincing of all his lengthening line in fiction. And better than any of them, better, I should say than Hemingway, Mr. Faulkner can write a still and deadly narrative that carries with it an unrolling series of events as vivid as modern caricature and as accurate as Dutch painting. I say *can*, for in the attempt to tell a story by its points of emphasis, omitting explanation and connectives, he is frequently elliptical and sometimes so incoherent that the reader loses his way and must go back after later enlightenment to see who was who in an earlier scene. Mr. Faulkner seems then to be trying to write a "talky," where the dialogue gives the situation while the continuity is left to the pictures, which, verbally presented, are not enough to clarify the reader's imagination. Yet narrative skill of a high order he undoubtedly possesses.

But the story!—It lies in two planes, an upper and lower, like a Russian ikon. On the upper plane are three important figures, of whom a girl and a boy will be most detested. She is a predatory female, still too young to be fully conscious of the meaning of her desires, technically a virgin, technically a student in the local university, but absorbed in a series of "dates" where sexual escapes from the flesh-hunting town boys who wait with their cars in the darks of the campus are her preoccupation. On her own plane she is nothing but a shallow, pretty flirt, playing with lasciviousness. The boy has been to "Virginia," and speaks in the stale romantics of the "Southern gentleman," about hard drinking, hard loving, and chivalry. On his own plane he is an empty-headed fool who lives by words. On their own plane the two are engaged in a mildly romantic escapade,—she is to race with him ahead of the football train in his waiting car, drinking on the way. He is short of "corn," gets some, is told that he can't hold his liquor, gets drunk, misses the train, catches it further along the line and finds his girl, gets drunk again, and smashes the car on a side road near a bootlegger's headquarters.

Thus they slide into the lower plane, the underworld. In a rickety house, with a gunman, a rum runner, a helper at the still, and a bootlegger and his woman, the girl loses her nerve and becomes a whimpering child, fascinated but afraid of the evil around her. The boy gets drunk again, and leaves her to save his own reputation if he can. She is raped under circumstances of fiendish perversion, which she invites by her own depravity, which even in her climaxes of terror keeps her hovering like a soiled moth near the danger. Her gunman seducer, himself impotent, shoots the nit-wit helper who tries to protect her, and puts her in a house of prostitutes in Memphis where she takes to gin and drugs with convincing rapidity. The bootlegger is tried for the murder he did not commit, and she kills him by false testimony, having first out of sheer restless amorousness drawn a new and real lover to the spot where he is neatly and inevitably murdered by the jealous gunman, who had used him in their sexual relations, for purposes better left undescribed. Thus the Judge's daughter and the youth from "Virginia," when drawn down into the unmoral underworld are shown as trash, a hundred times less valuable even than the drunken mistress of the Memphis house, the brutal rum runners, or the defective, soulless Popeye himself. These have a code. They are nothing.

And around this sordid tragedy hangs a kind-hearted, liberal man, fascinated by the injustice of human misery. Moved by instinctive generosity he determines to save the bootlegger from an unjust indictment, because that sturdy criminal's faithful woman with her pathetic child has touched his sympathies, because he cannot stand injustice, because he

*"SANCTUARY." By WILLIAM FAULKNER. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1931. $2.50.

This Week

"The Russian Experiment."
Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL.

"Whistler."
Reviewed by LAURA H. DUDLEY.

"Dynamite."
Reviewed by MARY A. BEARD

"Master of Manhattan."
Reviewed by DENIS TILDEN LYNCH.

"The Good Earth."
Reviewed by FLORENCE AYSCOUGH.

"The Quercus-Henry Survey."
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

A Newspaper Possibility.
By FABIAN FRANKLIN.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has fallen in love with his stepdaughter and feels obscurely that her dangerous course in the flippant, sordid world of the upper plane will be safer if by his legal skill he can rescue the college flirt and avert injustice. With what results? The bootlegger has rape added to his charge of murder and is burned alive by the mob. Popeye goes off unscathed, and when hung, is hung for a crime he never committed. The girl is rescued by father and brothers, and is last seen in Paris, restless, vacuous, a menace to society now that she is awake.

Mr. Faulkner's Mississippi is, we trust, a partial portrait, but his vivid narrative style makes it convincing; nor can anyone doubt the force and truth of his characterizations—Popeye, the filthy politician, the bootlegger's woman, the not-wit. Nor can any sane reader doubt that somewhere along the path he is following lies the end of all sanity in fiction. Here in this sadistic story is decadence in every sense that criticism has ever given the word, except dilettanteism—there is none of that. The emotions are sharpened to a febrile obsession with cruelty, lust, and pain which exaggerates a potentiality of human nature at the expense of human truth. These debased flappers and hideous mobs in a community which seems incapable of virtue in either the Christian or the Roman sense, are bad dreams of reality which no matter how truly set down are false to everything but accident and the exacerbated sensibilities of the author. To this disease Americans seem peculiarly liable, and there is a direct relationship between the drugged terrors, the unreal sadisms, and the morbid complexes of Poe's stories, and this new realistic decadence of which "Sanctuary" is an outstanding example.

Art is curious. Although it does not have to be representational of human life, when it does become more than design and gives form to human happenings it cannot and never has been able to go far into the abnormal, the unbalanced, the excessive without danger. Poe's more lurid stories are read now as drug phantasies, more interesting to the psychologist than to the man of letters, and so it will be with this new sadism, the novel cruelty by which the American scene with all its infinite shadings is made into something gross, sordid, or, as here, depraved with an ironic depravity in which the trivial by a kind of perversion becomes more horrible than professional evil, while what virtue exists in individuals only throws gasoline upon the lyncher's fire.

* * *

I have chosen Mr. Faulkner as a prime example of American sadism because is he so clearly a writer of power, and no mere experimenter with nervous emotion. He is distinguished above others in the cruel school by a firm grasp upon personality and his ability to enrich the flow of time with pertinent incident. No one who reads his description of the harlot's sob party and the drunken little boy will doubt his skill in prosaic horror. In "Sanctuary" I believe that sadism, if not anti-romance, has reached its American peak.

I say "has reached," for this is not Mr. Faulkner's last book. It was written before his imaginative and poetic "As I Lay Dying," a book in which the intolerable strain of cruelty breaks down into one of those poetic escapes into beauty by which the real artist has always saved himself from too much logic. In "As I Lay Dying" there is again a cruel mob, but it is withdrawn, watching the spectacle of a half-mad family who tell their stories by monologue in which one finds how far less intolerable is misery and violence if one sees into the hearts of the characters. It is almost as if Mr. Faulkner had said: I am not God. I am not responsible for these people. If I look at the outward aspects of life in the Mississippi I know, they are so terrible that I respond by impulses of cruelty which lead me to describe coldly events which when read can only arouse wrath or disgust. Let me start again with simpler people, naïfs and crazy folk, uncorrupted if also unmoralized, and tell my story as they must have seen it, thus forgetting my own scorns and cruelties, and so get closer to ultimate truth.

Perhaps "As I Lay Dying" is only a reaction from "Sanctuary" into a different morbidity. I do not think so. The creative artist is usually the first to turn from excess just when the weak and the imitative are racing ahead to their own destruction. He feels a call to a more important job.

The hard-boiled era is headed toward the dust heap where the soft-boiled era of the early 1900s has long preceded it. The post-war bitterness of wounded psyches has already subsided in England. Here it seems to be like an induced electricity where the pressure is higher but the substance less. The war-hurt generation is already too old for poetry, but just ripening for fiction. The candor behind their cruelties when they escape from the hard-boiled convention and grow wiser in life will give their work a substance and an edge which American fiction has too often lacked. They are not drugged, like Poe, nor have they his abnormal sensitivity which only the rightest of all possible worlds could have kept in bounds and only the most ethereal beauty could lift into the escape of real literature. They are—and I speak particularly of Faulkner and Hemingway—men of unusual ability who are working at their craft with a conscientiousness almost unknown to the easy going journalists who constitute so many of their contemporaries, and they have developed styles and methods, not better than, but different from, the practice of their established elders, such as Willa Cather or Sinclair Lewis, and perhaps better adapted to the new decades as they and theirs will see them. Yet, hurt themselves, they have so far vented their irritation upon, and transferred, as the psychologists say, their inferiorities to, a country and a personnel which can be hated, as they hate it, only when the imagination is still fevered. That fever, as it subsides, leaves the problem of rediscovering America, for America has to be rediscovered by every generation, the problem of discovering not just the drunkards, gunmen, politicians, near virgins, and futile, will-less youths which have so deeply engaged them, but the American scene in all its complexity. They will never do it while one ounce of sadism, one trace of hysteria remains.

Sense and Sensitivity

(*Continued from preceding page*)

Tom, Dick, and Harry, and poets and stars and rainy mornings. Here is the author's deep sense of the continuity of things and yet of their insecure foundations. Here is courageous doubt and mighty hope. Man is noble and a gentle voice is present to guide him if he will but hearken. We are again told to consider the lilies. A far-flung barbarism more devastating than Matthew Arnold ever dreamed is weighing us and distant peoples down. We have become a mob blind to beauty and truth. We are counseled that bad thinking will ever bring evil consequences, and reminded that something happened in 1914. It is hinted that a redefining of values is in order, and a more spacious exploration. "Have we got any distance, in our flying-machines?"

These and other tidings are brought to us in a prose which is new and of great worth. Essentially simple—quite unlike Conrad's, for example—it is part of that great tradition of straightforward and direct expression which, as old as Tindale and even Wyclif, has never died. It favors short sentences and simple, coördinate construction, and eschews such rhetorical devices as protrusive iteration, balance, and rhythm. Such prose does not attempt to lull the intellect or to create by its structure a poetical cadence. It is essentially prosaic, a vehicle for the expression of facts and ideas and not of transcendent emotion. This is the basic, the fundamental medium which Mr. Tomlinson employs. His high integrity, his distrust of false emotionalism, forbids any other. He must keep faith with truth as he perceives it. He cannot allow his art to become a species of deception.

But though he employs a medium basically prosaic and matter-of-fact, the result is highly poetical. For he is a great seer gifted with a sensitivity akin to that of Keats. A simple man, he loves simple things, though in their very simplicity he confronts an imponderable enigma. Out of soundings, he can be positive only when attacking those who, quite sure of themselves, deny the mystery with glib callousness. Because of this groping, his prose, essentially simple and direct, is constantly suggestive of bewilderment and wonder. He has made of plain prose a vehicle for poetry, not by altering its fundamental texture, but by sheer power of vision and command of words. Here is plain truth, and herein is mystery and beauty.

A word about the sixteen drawings in this volume. The artist was mentioned in 1910 by his father as a young boy who was then not sure of his vocation but had the habit of littering the house with sketches. He appears now to have found his vocation. They are highly original and thoroughly pleasing. Simple, economical of line, they yet suggest how illusive are familiar things. They are, indeed, wholly in keeping with the text itself.

The Bolshevik Machine

THE RUSSIAN EXPERIMENT. By ARTHUR FEILER. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

MR. FEILER'S discussion of Bolshevism calls for rather more mental effort on the part of the reader than most of the books about present-day Russia which have appeared in this country. The author is a staff writer for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Whether or not these chapters appeared originally as articles in that journal, I do not know, but they well might have. Even in English translation, they recall the wide, closely-packed columns of gray Gothic type of that excellent but solemn newspaper.

No lively, anecdotal reporting here; no pious horrors nor callow enthusiasms; little to be read for the mere fun of the thing. Mr. Feiler is interested in the general rather than the particular, and while it doesn't follow that he is, therefore, more nourishing, it won't do to try to follow his sober discussion of doctrine, tendencies, and results, without a certain concentration, nor with one's mind half on something else.

After considering, more or less in detail, various aspects of the Soviet state, Mr. Feiler, frankly granting that positive prophecies as to the outcome of the Russian "experiment" are impossible, draws up what he calls an "interim balance sheet." He finds, for example, a definite "change of heart" among the majority of at least the town dwellers. Twelve years of life and the unceasing pressure of the government have destroyed, except in the memories of the lingering relics of the former privileged class, attachment for the old way of living. The younger generation, even of "bourgeois" parents, find that way, in so far as they can picture it, "soft, senseless, and unreal. And the West, even the Russian emigration in the West, is so alien to their lives and even their wishes, that they regard a return thereto as something to be rejected as inconceivable. And in this change of heart consists, in spite of everything, the chance of this revolution."

What he chooses to call "Americanism," by which he means "the rationalized, rationally thinking, rational, economically acting man of the machine," seems on its way to triumph here. The Bolshevik leaders accept the implications of the machine age which Americans themselves frequently resist or hide their heads from, and set frankly about the job of creating the "collective man." Certainly, under capitalism, intellectual liberty

> is not secured in particularly brilliant fashion, when the laws of supply and demand and profit calculations decide the fate of the lyrics of a new Goethe, or when private capitalist groups are able to decide what political opinions may be placed before readers in the newspapers they buy up . . . but the appalling thing, however, is that Russians are today taught not to want this mental freedom, and generally to unlearn the need for it. It is the collectivization of man.

Meanwhile, in both the camps of theoretical communism and theoretical capitalism, there are all sorts of paradoxes and contradictions. How far does the American disdain of Bolshevism represent the working out of capitalistic doctrine, as such, and how far is it due to our ability, thus far, to share in a "soothing abundance." The wastes and misdirections of Bolshevik bureaucracy are obvious enough, but how about the wastes and duplications of uncontrolled capitalism? How free is competition, actually, especially in a western Europe where anonymous millions scarcely dream of penetrating the ranks of the ruling financial caste? The Bolsheviks repudiate private enterprise, and yet accept it to the extent of encouraging certain special services with special rewards. Their doctrine calls for a world revolution and yet necessity has forced them to the quite un-Marxian theory that the realization of socialism is possible in a single country. And so on—on both sides of the barrier.

Bolshevism's foundations are materialistic, its instruments the power of dictatorship, it preaches hate, yet "through it all there gleams the ideals of all great European revolutions, old and yet ever young, changing with the times, yet in their essence remaining unchanged." The thing is hot, fierce, alive. And opposing it is a Europe, skeptical, weary, doing little to realize the ideals embodied in its own State constitutions. In the welter in which he finds himself, Mr. Feiler can only exclaim "What a chaotic world!"

If the Russian experiment does "work," if the goal

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the collective man is eventually reached, a new revolution, the author thinks, "will assuredly come, although its arrival may be long delayed—a revolution of liberation from mass influence, a veritably human revolt." Europe might yet, he thinks, choose another path, that of social justice and the protection of man's right to his own personality. But he seems uncertain that present-day Europe has the will for any such task, and meanwhile the Bolshevik machine rumbles on, with increased creakings and crackings, and greater tension. . . .

The True Whistler

WHISTLER. By JAMES LAVER. New York: The Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. 1930. $5.

Reviewed by LAURA H. DUDLEY
Fogg Art Museum

THIRTY years ago there was no painter and etcher more discussed than Whistler. He had his ardent admirers like Joseph Pennell, who wrote of him, "James McNeill Whistler, . . . the greatest etcher who ever lived," and also his opponents, as John Ruskin, who, referring to one of his paintings, said: ". . . harmony in pink and white (or some such nonsense); absolute rubbish, . . . which had taken about a quarter of an hour to scrawl or daub—it has no pretense to be called painting." Obviously the true Whistler lies somewhere between the two extremes. Other artists have come forward to demand the attention and criticism of the public. Whistler's paintings are no longer the center of attraction in an exhibition and his prints no longer sell for the excessive prices they once commanded. After so much has been written, it would seem as if all had been said and that there was no place for another book on Whistler and his work. Mr. Laver's new work is a delightful surprise and in his unbiased presentation of an interesting subject, a valuable addition to Whistler literature. It is a sympathetic and understanding study of a man both eccentric and charming, sometimes most fascinating, at other times intolerable, with a temperament Mr. Laver says resembling that of Cyrano, who had an "art of making enemies" not always so "gentle."

The author tells us that Whistler claimed to have been born in three different places, but that it was in Lowell, Massachusetts, that he first looked out upon a world which was to furnish him with the subjects for his pictures.

We follow the boy on the long journey to St. Petersburg where his father, an engineer, had gone to build a railroad from St. Petersburg to Moscow for Nicholas I. After his father's death the family returned to America, Whistler went to West Point, but failed to become an officer. Unsuccessful also was his attempt to be a locomotive engineer. He entered the coastal survey at Washington, and there learned the technique of etching which was to be of such value later. Then we see Whistler, the artist, as he flits from one country to another. The author presents a vivid and interesting picture of an artist's life in London, Paris, and Venice, introducing us to the women Whistler loved and to his artist friends, of whom many, such as Fantin, Courbet, Du Maurier, and Rossetti, to name but a few, have won renown.

Mr. Laver makes clear the influences which combined to mould the man and the artist. He recognizes Whistler's faults and weaknesses, but instead of ignoring them or excusing them, admits them frankly, sees and explains the reason for them, leaving the reader unprejudiced about the man and the artist and eager to know more about him and his works. He does not stop at a discussion of Whistler the man, but with a clear understanding of his aims and ideas, discusses his paintings, etchings, and lithographs, giving a very fair appraisal of the artist and the works of art which he produced. The book is not only delightful reading because of its contents but it is easy and pleasant to use, because it is well-printed with clear, well-designed type on good paper. The well-proportioned margins and good and carefully selected illustrations add much to the attractiveness of the volume.

George Buckstone Browne, the veteran surgeon who attended George Meredith in a serious illness and to whom "The Amazing Marriage" was dedicated, recently made a gift to the Royal College of Surgeons to found a surgical biological research institute. The £50,000 which is to be further increased to double represents a lifetime's savings.

Class Violence in America

DYNAMITE: The Story of Class Violence in America. By LOUIS ADAMIC. New York: The Viking Press. 1931.

Reviewed by MARY A. BEARD

THE normal mood of man seems belligerent. His major history has been one long record of resort to arms for the settlement of grievances and his preferred culture that of the battle axe. Hence in Louis Adamic's "Dynamite: the Story of Class Violence in America," the novelty is the weapon employed rather than the practice of violence itself. The class war is not new. Peasants have waged it with pitchforks and scythes. Slaves have carried it on with faggots and hatchets. The bourgeois used guns and guillotines. But dynamite marked a new phase in this struggle and, when it came into play, some of the revolutionary-minded believed it would supersede gunpowder as an instrument of pugnacity. Dynamite could give to the single arm the strength of an army. It offered to the lone brain a chance to defeat a multitude. Until poison gas and tear bombs, caterpillar tractors and

Caricature of Whistler from the collection of Max Beerbohm. From "Men and Memories," by Sir William Rothenstein (Coward-McCann).

airplanes, arrived in the arena of warfare, a stick of dynamite proved in fact to be a formidable weapon especially well adapted to secret designs and simplicity of concepts.

That the story of violence in America is intimately connected with the story of dynamite is dramatically indicated in the "History of the Explosive Industry in America." There we learn that this explosive, three or four times as deadly as gunpowder and peculiarly suited to the pulverisation of buildings, was invented by none other than Alfred Nobel—of peace prize notoriety—in 1866 and got into the American market early in the 'seventies as the result of a lively advertising campaign. To the high-powered salesman, Fred Julian, orders were given to capture the American market though the heavens fell. And this is how he did it:

> [. . . hired nine good rock-miners, most of whom could not even write, and sent them on the road with instructions to drill holes and demonstrate anywhere and everywhere they could, and if they could not sell dynamite, to give it away, for we simply had to get business, cost what it may.

Thus dynamite itself was a racket.

Eventually it was adopted by great construction companies for blasting and other purposes and, since it was always lying around easy of access, husky iron and steel workers who had been wont to drop bolts, bars, and heavy things in general on the heads of scabs as a means of intimidating labor seized upon dynamite as a means of intimidating contractors and their bosses. When the McNamaras went into action in 1911, guerrilla experiments had already been made with the new stuff which Albert Parsons, a Chicago anarchist, had visualized as the solution of labor exploitation. In 1885, in his paper, *Alarm*, Parsons wrote its eulogy:

> Dynamite! Of all the good stuff, that is the stuff! Stuff several pounds of this sublime stuff into an inch pipe (gas or water pipe), plug up both ends, insert a cap with a fuse attached, place this in the immediate vicinity of a lot of rich loafers who live by the sweat of other people's brows, and light the fuse. A most cheerful and gratifying result will follow. In giving dynamite to the downtrodden millions of the globe, science has done its best work. . . .

Resentful American laborers were prepared to take this advice.

Europe was watching the outcome, tense and speculative. France had been able to shoot down on a wholesale scale her proletariat who revolted in 1871; guns had been ineffective there for the workers and all they had as a last card was sabotage. Though "Big Bill" Haywood seemed a brute to Georges Sorel, apostle of syndicalism, Haywood was really "Bukunin-like" according to Adamic. In 1878 Bismarck had crushed the socialist uprising in Germany by political prowess, sending émigrés to America by the thousands where they organized new battalions and, if they still relied on guns, kept alive the revolutionary spirit. Marx and Engels thought that politics could only be fought with politics but every German did not agree. And while intransigents of many nations debated ways and means at international conferences, ardent Irish folk demonstrated what sheer will could do. To the Molly Maguires who moved in droves to America in the 'seventies, chieftained by the doughty dame, who in the old country had merely carried under her petticoat "a pistol strapped to each of her stout thighs" for use when landlords, agents, bailiffs, or process-servers interfered with her liberties, it was an enchanting weapon that science had now provided. So in the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania where they settled, they were able to make their surroundings still livelier than was possible in the Emerald Isle.

To the grand climax and on to its aftermath, Louis Adamic carries the labor movement, violently considered; thus his range is "from the unorganized, spasmodic riots in the eighteen-thirties on the part of the ill-treated laborers to the highly organized terrorism, or 'racketeering' of today."

He also treats of the ideological aspects of its leadership, but less sympathetically. Yet it would seem that any non-violent approach to a solution of labor exploitation was the significant historical novelty and, in the light of dynamite's failure to achieve the longed-for end, perhaps the test of labor virility. The unique feature of the American story is the capitalist weapon brought into action in [illegible] stances. It is true that the masters use[d] for dynamite to some extent but their mo[st] tool was the courts. It was the writ of [injunction] secured from judges, that enabled the[m] manœuvre labor notwithstanding its ard[ent] spirit. So the peculiarities of the Amer[ican] system have also been a factor not to be n[egl]ected in a discussion of labor violence.

This study is replete and complete as to fa[cts]. Adamic writes with the ease and vigor of one wh[o] appreciates and feels what is involved in the effor[t] of the underdog to become the upperdog. But it is his emphasis that matters. There he makes short shrift of the leaders who tried to work out tactic[s] of a soberer sort.

Richard Croker

MASTER OF MANHATTAN. The Life of Richard Croker. By LOTHROP STODDARD. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1931. $3.50.

By DENIS TILDEN LYNCH

THIRTY years ago Alfred Henry Lewis gave us "Richard Croker," a volume that a sane man, jealous of his reputation, would not have written. But in Mr. Stoddard's book, the first since 1901, there is integrity of purpose combined with a style that holds the reader fascinated to the last.

Richard Croker was leader of Tammany Hall from 1886 to 1902, save for the three years he permitted John C. Sheehan to serve in his stead. Mr. Stoddard could have taken the same period in any other large city and evolved an equally enthralling tale of a machine leader grown rich on the tribute extorted from vice, gambling, and other forms of crime; from price paid for place; from levies on holders of city contracts; from public utility corporations seeking favors,—and what not. Instead of the Democratic City of New York, Mr. Stoddard could have given us the same picture of shame in the Republican cities of Philadelphia and Chicago,—to name only the largest. Nor is the author unaware of this, as his pages disclose. But the glamor that [illegible] metropolis has for all of us lured Mr. S[toddard] [illegible] otherwise might have given us an eq[ual] [illegible] of his own Boston.

M[r.] [illegible] treatment of the prob-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lem of which Croker and his kind are symbols, and his comprehensive grasp of the factors involved, command high praise. Realizing that the problem will be solved only by "the patient labor and clear vision of these long-headed, commonsense builders (*reformers*, in the literal sense)," he shows little patience with the blundering "emotional zealots." Observing that this type is impractical, uncompromising, and "irritating, not only to politicians but to the average run of mankind," he says:

> The typical "reformer's" lamentable ignorance of human nature is strikingly revealed by his desire to coerce the public, by legislative acts or municipal ordinances, to matters which run counter to popular usage and therefore rouse the public to angry defiance. That, in turn, nullifies the special legislation, besides bringing all law into discredit.

But this quotation is not an index of the book, for Mr. Stoddard's dramatic story of sordid realism does its own moralizing.

He shows us Croker the boy, a victim of street environment, rising through dint of fistic prowess to leadership among the plug-uglies. At twenty-four Croker heads "150 metropolitan bandits" in their assaults upon the ballot boxes of a neighboring city. Three years later we see him as an attendant in a court of justice. Another year passes and we behold Alderman Croker. Thenceforward his rise is rapid until he steps into the shoes of the dead Honest John Kelly,—called honest because his stealings were infinitesimal compared with those of his predecessor, Boss Tweed. Kelly left less than a million behind him.

There was a tragic pause in Croker's upward climb, although it seemed then that he would reach the unsought eminence of a gallows. The jury stood six to six for hanging Croker for the murder of another election gangster. Mr. Stoddard goes beyond the verdict and reaches the conclusion that Croker was innocent,—as he was.

Again he is fair to his subject in rejecting the sworn story of Croker's brother-in-law of the satchel filled with $180,000. "Imagine me going round town showing McCann a bag full of money and telling him it was boodle," said Croker. "Rubbish. I'm not such a fool as to go hunting Aldermen with a brass band like that."

> ...e partisan investigations of the city under ...stituted by the Republican state legislators ...cally sketched. It was in the second of Croker, when asked by Frank Moss if he ...ng for his own pocket all the time, made ...ring retort: "All the time—the same as

the author known Frank Moss he would interpolated at this point that Moss never ...rked for his own pocket. The unflinching integ...ity of Moss made him a marked man with the local Republican machine leaders, the venal allies of Tammany Hall, to the end of his days. Frank Moss was a reformer after Mr. Stoddard's own heart.

The author gives us vivid flashes of the seamy side of the metropolis, made seamier by the baleful contacts of the machine. Glimpses are given us of the more picturesque figures who crossed Croker's path. But throughout, Croker, the politician, sinister and brazenly defiant, dominates until we see him in his retirement, flitting between his estate in Ireland, where he bred a winner of the classic derby, and his winter home at West Palm Beach.

In a book of such small compass—its length is between 65,000 and 75,000 words—much had to be omitted. With few exceptions, the author has displayed sound judgment. But he should have included the meeting between Grover Cleveland and Croker at the Hotel Victoria on the eve of Cleveland's second election to the Presidency. Historically, this is the most important event in Croker's career, and will live when all else that he did is forgotten. It was an occasion when Croker was on the side of right. Here it should be observed that Mr. Stoddard's worthy volume is not, as its sub-title indicates, a life of Richard Croker; it is a study of his political career. There is little of the personal side of Croker in the book.

The author has delved deeply, at times, into the record. But his reliance on secondary sources in dealing with Honest John Kelly has resulted in three minor errors. Kelly's rift with Governor Lucius B. Robinson in 1879 was not caused by a patronage dispute but by the removal of Kelly's County Clerk, Henry A. Gumbleton, after a trial before the Governor on charges of co... ...on in office. Tammany bolted the party that ... Robinson for this act; and Kell... to rob his party's choice of certain victory. The author was misled into repeating that Kelly "polled nearly 100,000 votes and with the Democracy thus split, the Republicans nosed in by a small majority." Alonzo B. Cornell, Republican polled 418,567 votes; Robinson, 375,790; Kelly, 77,566. Mr. Stoddard errs in assuming that Tammany was read out of the Democratic State Convention only in 1881. The Tammany delegates were also denied seats in the Democratic State Convention of the preceding year. Again Mr. Stoddard errs in saying: " . . . within three years [of 1881] he [Kelly] locked horns with . . . Grover Cleveland." Cleveland and Kelly broke in 1883.

But even the most captious will enjoy this stirring story of Mr. Stoddard's.

The Real China

THE GOOD EARTH. By PEARL S. BUCK. New York: The John Day Co. 1931.

Reviewed by FLORENCE AYSCOUGH

A BEAUTIFUL, beautiful book.* At last we read, in the pages of a novel, of the real people of China. They seem to spring from their roots, to develop and mature even as their own rice springs from a jade green seed bed and comes to its golden harvest. We do not read of wily mandarins, and unctuous attendants; of ladies unbelievably beautiful and heroes incredibly brave; of wide spreading gardens, and magnificent buildings, of birds, beasts, and flowers such as have never flourished this side of the Western Paradise. In a word, the China of fantasy so often exploited is absent from its pages. Instead we have the honest peasant, and his faithful wife; the pampered singing girl, and her unscrupulous attendant; the rich earth, and a farmer's mud house; we have flowers, too, and the many courts of great houses, but it is all real,—so real. I have lived for many years in such a country and among such people as Mrs. Buck describes, and as I read her pages I smell once more the sweet scent of bean flowers opening in the spring, the acrid odor of nightsoil poured lavishly on the soil during the growing season, and I feel again the blazing sunshine of the harvest months; all as it was and is there in the Yangtze Valley.

The story opens on Wang Lung's wedding day. He, a peasant, with a tiny patch of land, cannot afford an expensive wife, so takes a slave girl from the great house, the house of Hwang, nearby. And what a woman she is, this plain featured, large footed, silent O-lan! And what Wang Lung owes to her unquestioning devotion! The mud house is transformed, the sparse meals gain new flavor, the cotton quilts become soft, the clothing of Wang Lung and his father is made whole. Furthermore O-lan takes her place beside her husband in the fields, and to crown all, bears the son who will carry on the family line.

As the years pass by harvests are good, Wang Lung buys land even from the house of Hwang, prosperity smiles upon him, and then comes—famine. The family, increased to many mouths, must now go south, to the fertile lands of Kiangsu. A pitiful procession sets out. After days of weary walking they arrive at the railway. Wang Lung exclaims, "Up, my sons, and help the grandfather up. We will go on the firewagon and sit while we walk south."

For many months must the family live in a hut made of mats, sustaining life as best they may; but always supported and preserved in their self respect by the thought of the land from which they have come, the land which belongs to them, the land to which they belong. In China the people and the earth seem one.

During the last Winter I spent in China, just such a hut of mats sprang up near my own gateway, in it lived just such a woman as O-lan, a woman at whom I marvelled, wondering how it were possible to live in such conditions and yet preserve one's calm self-respect. I often spoke with her, and one day spoke of her to my *amah* as a "beggar woman." Amah replied in a gently reproachful tone: "*ta fan ti*—beg food people! Those are not such. North of the river they own ground. When Spring comes they will return." Her words were true. Spring wind rattled the roof tiles one mild night; Spring rain fell, and when I went for my morning walk the mat hut had vanished.

The picture of these months of exile is one of the most vivid in the book. Misery is heightened by the arrival of conscript officers, and Wang Lung, the sturdy farmer, dare not show himself by day, but his courage and that of his wife is unconquerable. China in her unbeatable peasants has one of the greatest assets that a nation may have!

Finally "that comes which happens when the rich are too rich and the poor too poor." The mob breaks down the gateway of a great house and rushes through the courtyards looting and leaving devastation in its wake. Wang Lung and his family, swept into the crowd through no volition of their own, finally find themselves in possession of sufficient treasure to return to their own village, to their own land, and to commence life once again.

The drama of this life as it now unfolds is told by Mrs. Buck with marvellous insight, intuition, and fidelity. How natural it seems that Wang Lung, after his fortune is reestablished, should during a period of enforced inactivity drift to the town, to the tea house, and that he should there meet Lotus, most talented of the Flower Maidens, that he should become infatuated with her. The sequence is preordained. She comes to the house as secondary wife and for many years forces Wang Lung to indulge her costly whims.

It is impossible to follow the tale step by step, it is equally impossible to select, for notice, isolated portions from Mrs. Buck's exquisite mosaic; the individual pieces are so skilfully dovetailed that they make a perfect picture of—to use a Chinese phrase—the black haired people who till the ground for rice. I would like to quote the whole book! As I may not do this I would urge everyone who has the slightest interest in that land known for centuries as the Middle Kingdom, to read it at once. I am filled with gratitude to Mrs. Buck for having turned over a new page in fiction with a Chinese background, and for having created characters which, living and moving, have being.

Mrs. Buck's novel is so moving and so "actual" that I must note one or two points which seem to me slightly out of key. From my own experience, and from information given me, I doubt whether Wang Lung, the farmer, could have fetched his bride from the great house and have taken her without ceremony to his home. The responsibility felt by the heads of rich families towards their underlings was very great, and responsibilities in China are generally lived up to. It is difficult to imagine that at least a minimum of the ceremony so vital for a woman's future status should not have been required by the head of the great house before consent to a marriage was given.

It is difficult, too, to imagine the Old Mistress smoking opium before any outsider, and quite impossible to imagine that she did it "sitting." Opium smokers inevitably lie on their sides.

In the matter of child-bearing, the emphasis laid by Mrs. Buck on a child a year for every married woman seems to me too great. Exceptions there probably are, but in a country where the poorer women suckle their children for three years or more a child a year is not the rule. Among the rich, one of the reasons given for concubinage is that excessive child-bearing is too hard for a woman to endure—and children there must be. But what is a slight matter of overemphasis? It is ungrateful to mention it!—F. A.

The London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* writes, apropos of Bertrand Russell who, through the death of Earl Russell has just succeeded to his title: "It has been suggested that the heir to the title, Mr. Bertrand Russell, might refuse to take his place in the House of Lords, but it is difficult to see why. When he does the Labor party in that House will not be weakened but will rather be strengthened. The late Lord Russell was a Fabian. The new lord describes himself as a Socialist, but is described by Socialists as a Communist. He is in any case a distinguished philosopher and scientist, by universal tribute an eminent intellect. How he would run as a member of a party is another question, and perhaps a difficult question with all this gifted family."

* For a review of Mrs. Buck's earlier novel, "East Wind, West Wind," see page 680.

The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY.....*Editor*
AMY LOVEMAN.....*Managing Editor*
WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.....*Contributing Editor*
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.....*Contributing Editor*
NOBLE A. CATHCART.....*Publisher*

Published weekly, by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President; Roy E. Larsen, Vice President; Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates per year, postpaid: in the U. S. and Mexico, $3.50; in Canada, $4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, $4.50. All business communications should be addressed to 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 1, 1879. Vol. VII. No. 35.

The Saturday Review is indexed in the "Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature."

Copyright, ... Review Co., Inc.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Bowling Green

The Quercus-Henry Survey

THE long-projected Quercus-Henry Book Trade Survey has begun excellently. Old Quercus, the sardonic bookhandler, and Mr. Frank Henry, the active sales-executive of a large publishing house, having heard many cries of distress from the underbrush of the book business, determined to set out on an unprejudiced exploration. If the Book Trade is really an Andromeda, then these are certainly the twin Persei who might rescue her. But the horrors and humors of the Trade are not learned in offices and filing cases, but by visit and search among the shops themselves.

☞ Speaking of Andromeda on Wimpole Street, a number of bookshops have noticed increased inquiries for Browning's poems since Katherine Cornell opened her charming production at the Empire Theatre. We still disbelieve that anyone living, except Professor Phelps, has ever actually read *Sordello*. The copy that Miss Cornell uses in the play, is it an authentic first edition (Moxon, 1840)? Somehow, as seen from the balcony, it looked rather small. Will Miss Cornell inform us?

☞ When a manager puts on a play of such specifically literary appeal, it should be advertised in this *Saturday Review* which is read by 60,000 booklovers.

☞ The Quercus-Henry surveyors were highly interested to learn that the famous old McDevitt-Wilson bookshop in the Hudson Terminal building has been taken over by Campbell and Leunig, Inc., in addition to their vigorous business at 8 East 12th Street, New York. This is old-home week for Charley Leunig who began his bookselling career with McDevitt-Wilson back in 1907 at 1 Barclay Street, right after graduating from the Manual Training High School in Brooklyn. Nothing less massive than the Woolworth Building was required to move those young booksellers from Barclay Street, but they to shift to the Hudson Terminal about 1909. Mr. Leunig, in taking charge of McDevitt-Wilson, comes back to alma mater. The firm of Campbell and Leunig is unique among booksellers in that the other member, Mr. Courtney Campbell, an Amherst alumnus, is a drainage engineer by profession who makes books his recreation and hobby. Our old friend Raymond Halsey continues as the shop's right-hand man, and exclaimed to the surveyors that a Reorganization Sale with Very Generous Reductions was now in progress.

☞ Old Quercus, who is a great believer in Beautiful Women in Bookshops, suggested that Josie Johnston, who used to work there in the good old days, might come back now and then and dazzle the customers. Ralph Wilson, who gave us a friendly welcome for so many years in that excellent shop, plans to open one of his own in New Jersey; we wish him all good fortune.

☞ Alfred Goldsmith of 42 Lexington Avenue was missed by the surveyors when they called on their conscientious round, but it was noted that Alfred continues his fine habit of always keeping a George Gissing first in stock; he offers *The Crown of Life*, 1899, for $7.50. Those were congenial words, by the way, of Carl Rollins in this *Review* last week, about the dulness of "mint condition" firsts. How much more human and appealing a book that shows some signs of use and living. What is more thrilling to the genuine booklover than a rowdy old public library copy of a well-loved book, with all its wounds in the rear.

☞ Halting in a speakeasy, just for a moment's recuperation, the hard-working surveyors found George Bye and Laurence Stallings toasting the fact that Laurence is about to resume book-reviewing: his column, called with shrewd candor BOOKS FOR SALE, begins again this week in the New York *Sun*. This is good news: Mr. Stallings has the rare and good quality of enthusiasm; he convinced us also, what we had had the bad manners to question, that he knows the meaning of the word *nugatory*.

☞ In this speakeasy an odd thing happened: an anonymous gentleman at a corner table sent round a complimentary drink to the Surveyors' table, and when the surveyors wondered why, he explained that he had won a bet of $10 by identifying Old Quercus. His companion did not believe it was Quercus, but the winner recognized the Danish oakum goatee, so like Keyserling.

☞ Here also Mr. Henry learned, to his great pleasure, that the books the charming Mrs. J. B. Priestley is reading on her journey West are *One-Way Ride* by Walter Noble Burns and *You Gotta Be Rough* by Mike Fiaschetti.

☞ There can be no doubt that this is going to be a hearty solstice in the book business, there is so much good stuff coming along. Harrison Smith, and rightly, reported himself as That Way about *Juan in America* by Eric Linklater. It would not be fair to talk about it before publication, but this story of Don Juan's descendant and his adventures in the U. S., the international Home from Home, will tweak many sensibilities. It varies from honeyed urbane sardonics down to travesty and picaresque. The surveyors, who are hardened intuitives, regard this as a Sure Thing. The description of Mr. Brisbane, under the Australian alias of "Mr. Adelaide," is one of many teasing jocularities. The cry of the racketeer's intellectual daughter, "I've been integrated" may well become a catch-word. This book first became famous when Jonathan Cape's loud sonorous laugh was heard booming over Russell Square, London, the cry of a Publisher mating with a Manuscript, and all the other Bloomsbury publishers grew anxious, wondering what Capajon had discovered.

☞ The Scotch are always the people who do everything best when they care to, and there is yet another Scottish book coming along which will be the subtlest sensation of this summer; the surveyors are pledged to keep it dark for the moment, it dare not be published until vacation time when theologians are off duty, but probably Mr. Dan Longwell of Doubleday's will tell you when the time comes.

☞ The John Day Company is doing admirably with that large and brave and fine book *The Good Earth*, which gives one a troublingly vivid sense of actual living; the same terror and amazement will be found in the new Seabrook *Jungle Ways* which has had the Harcourt office in a trance. Those who are not [illegible]ned by some extraordinarily humorous candors, [illegible]owing-up of a lot of old sea sentimentalities, have been caught between wind and water by Archie Binns's *The Maiden Voyage*, which has the most unusual Boston heroine these surveyors ever d[illegible]d of. If that book is not banned in Boston, sa[illegible] Quercus, then Dick Fuller is no longer pontiff.

☞ You never can tell where a little breeze will arise and blow: the Macmillan Company were startled to find that a member of the Federal Trade Commission goes about the country recommending Big Business Men with a sense of the grotesque to read Capek's *The Absolute at Large*.

☞ Heavens and earth, cried Quercus, as the surveyors went about and about, buttonholing publishers and eavesdropping on bookstores, if these people don't do business this year it can only be because they are dead inside. The whole earth is in a ferment of speculation and inquiry; "the character of the universe is any man's guess," ejaculates the spring catalogue of Farrar and Rinehart; Russia seems to be hard at work and everyone else dithering. It is in books more than in any other created thing that all this humorous and despairing candor exhibits itself, and provided there can be adequate facilities for incinerating them after we're through with them the Book Business can conquer the world. There has been the most amazing lot of palaver about the Five Year Plan in Russia; the surveyors decided to draw up a Five Year Plan for themselves (physical, mental, and spiritual) and see what progression and pilgrimage they could achieve by Taking Thought for the Morrow.

☞ In still another quiet hideaway, the headquarters of the Grillparzer Club, where they have the best veal cutlets in a crust of cheese ever tasted anywhere (Seabrook's description of his cannibal meal in *Jungle Ways* is one of the most honestly ghastly things ever printed; old Quercus, descendant of Danish patisseurs, shook with purely instinctive taboo) the surveyors found Max Schuster and a group of idealists perfecting the great scheme for a Million Registered Bookbuyers.

☞ Nor is the thrilling variegation of the book trade confined to the metropolis: here springs up the Housatonuc Bookshop at Salisbury, Conn. ("occupies an old house near the convergence of the Under Mountain Road and the Jonathan Trumbull Highway") which lists in its first catalogue a copy of Captain Marryat's *Diary in America* (3 vols., 1839, $25) which says he found in America so many different kinds of cocktails he cannot remember them all. And The Crusaders, Inc., 100 East 42 Street, will send you on application a Map of the Speakeasies in Washington, D. C., which ought to be framed as an heirloom and a Historical Comment.

☞ Comparatively few booksellers (it was the sad meditation of the Surveyors) are alert to the exciting things happening every minute. Last Tuesday there was sold at the American Art Association a letter from George Du Maurier to J. R. Lowell announcing hilariously his completion of *Peter Ibbetson*.

☞ And some noble letters from George Gissing to his sister Ellen When we say noble we mean exactly that—"I think of very little but art, and all my work is profoundly pessimistic. Never mind; if I live another ten years, there shall not be many contemporary novelists ahead of me. Scott and Thackeray did not begin till they were forty." In one of these letters Gissing speaks of the 23rd chapter of *Villette* as "one of the most glorious things in English literature, and says the actress there described was suggested by Mlle Rachel.

☞ Well, insisted Quercus, I always keep *Villette* in stock in the World's Classics series.

☞ Business will always be good, the Surveyors mused, for booksellers and publishers with imagination. The reason why business is so suicidally bad for most of the old-time magazines nowadays is that they cannot realize the market is wildly overcrowded, and the time has come for some radical reconceptions of the magazine function.

☞ Among more expensive books, the Best Seller in Quercus's shop lately has been *Modern Interiors*, containing 292 superb photographs of every kind of modernistic architecture both public and private. It is in effect a textbook of the cleansing process of modern simplification; it is a book which keeps architects and interior decorators and stage designers awake at night with riotous dreams. William Edwin Rudge imported a few hundred copies from abroad, but has already had to reorder. For people who can afford to think of things in broad sweeps of novelty, this book is a fairy-tale.

☞ The surveyors ended their first day's clinic in high humor. They could not help believing that there was every reason to be confident, and they sat down to write congratulations to R. K. Leavitt the G. Lynn Sumner Company who writes some the best advertising copy they ever see. The *Saturday Review* itself, modest and tranquil as it is, intends a Large Year. It deserves more readers, and has an affectionate ambition to track them down.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, responding some time ago to a toast to Dickens, and referring to his doubt in advance of his speech as to what to say, remarked:

"With this perplexity inside me, then, I took a walk by night: and here, because I won't admit just yet to being an old man, some of you who remember Master Humphrey will forgive my inverting his confession *Night* is *not* generally my time for walking. But this night was clear and full of stars; one star shot; and with it there shot down, oddly enough, the recollection of a passage in Walt Whitman. On just such a February night fifty years ago in America, Whitman walked out oppressed by the telegraphed news that here, in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, Thomas Carlyle lay dying. And out of all the deep interstellar spaces, so many million miles remote from America or Chelsea, his mind could fetch but this thought—'what would our literature have been in my time—nay, what would my life have been—*with Carlyle left out?*' Well, it is just one hundred years ago since Charles Dickens entered the Press Gallery of the House of Commons; almost sixty since day after day rich and poor trooped past the flowers on his grave in the Abbey: and I ask you, how different would these one hundred years have been to our fathers and to us in our turn, *with Dickens left out?*"

A new opera, based on "The Taming of the Shrew," has been presented in Rome. The music is by Maestro Mario Persico, and is based on a libretto by Signor Arturo Rossato.

Goethe's birth place at Frankfurt-on-Main, G[illegible]many, is said to be in danger of collapse. R[illegible] are to be undertaken immediately.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Comic Heritage

IN 1822, at a theatre in New Orleans whose pit was crowded with flatboatmen, an actor stepped out in buckskin shirt and leggings, mocassins, and a fur cap, with a rifle on his shoulder. He might have come from the audience. To a familiar air he sang a new song by the author of "The Old Oaken Bucket"—

But Jackson he was wide awake, he wasn't scar'd at trifles,
For well he knew what aim we take with our Kentucky rifles.
So he led us down to Cypress Swamp, the ground was low and mucky;
There stood John Bull in martial pomp: *but here was old Kentucky!*

With this he threw his cap to the ground and took aim. The response was a deafening Indian yell and cataclysms of applause. Thereafter the song was sung in theatre after theatre in the South and West, often half a dozen times in an evening. Sweeping eastward, it reached fame in New York with "symphonies" and accompaniments and elaborations—

We rais'd a bank to hide our breasts, not that we thought of dying,
But that we always like to rest unless the game is flying,
Behind it stood our little force; none wished it to be greater,
For every man was half a horse and half an alligator.

Like the Yankee in the Revolution the backwoodsman had leapt up as a noticeable figure out of war—the War of 1812; but in the scattered western country his portrait had taken shape slowly. Once on the national horizon he made up in noise what he had lost in time. He grew rhapsodic—about himself; he was not only half horse, half alligator, he was also the sea-horse of the mountain, a flying whale, a bear with a sore head. He had sprung from the Potomac of the world. He was the most cunning of the creatures of the forest, "a ring-tailed roarer." Oddly enough he was also a flower. "I'm the yaller blossom of the forest." Heels cracking, he leapt into the air to proclaim his attributes against all comers like an Indian preparing for warfare. As a preliminary to a fight he neighed like a stallion or crowed like a cock. Leaping, crowing, flapping his wings, he indulged in dances resembling beast dances among savages; his heel-crackings and competitive matches were like savage efforts to create strength by exhibiting strength. They even appeared, in the fertile new country, like those primitive ceremonies to produce growth by which the sower leaps high to make the hemp grow high.

The backwoodsman not only created a bestiary; with the single digression into the floral he insisted that he was a beast—a new beast—and the records prove that in this contention he was often right. Gouging was his favorite method of attack in affairs not settled with gun or knife. Men of the backwoods joined in mortal combat stark naked, strapped within a few inches of each other to a bench, armed with bowie-knives. Horror, terror, death, were written large in the life of the rivers and forests. Yet the backwoodsman kept a comic oblivious tone; he seemed possessed of "a certain jollity of mind, pickled in the scorn of fortune." A traveler floundering through a cypress swamp in Ohio saw a beaver hat lying crown upward in the mud. It moved, and he lifted it with his whip. Underneath was a man's head—a laughing head that cried "Hello, stranger!" The traveler offered his assistance but the head declined, saying that he had a good horse under him.

THE backwoodsman kept a large blank gaze fixed upon the stranger as he polished his tales; he always demanded an audience; yet in the end his finest efforts were for his peers. Half magnification, half sudden strange reversal, his stories were likely to culminate in moments of "sudden glory" that had a touch of the supernatural. Indian traces appeared in them with a comic movement upsidedown. Fragments of Gaelic lore brought by early pioneers in the West may have strengthened his sense of natural magic. Tall tales were often like wrestling matches or the rhapsodic boastings and leapings and crowings and neighings that prefaced a fight, with one tale pitted against another. A knockdown force belongs to many of them. Some verged toward that median between terror and laughter which is the grotesque, and some plunged into the monstrous. The usual manner was impersonal: take it or leave it. A bright trail of fact usually fixed the attention of the listener; and this trail seemed natural. The look and feel of things was important in all these stories, as they were habitually for the huntsman and scout and pioneer. A favorite approach was scientific, as though natural wonders were being expounded.

The backwoodsman's fancy roamed over two figures of his own kind; Davy Crockett, the hunter and backwoods oracle, and Mike Fink, known in legend as the first floatboatman who dared to take a broadhorn over the Falls of the Ohio. Fink's frolics and pranks, his feats of strength, his marksmanship, became themes for endless story-telling. He passed into legend not only because of his early exploits on the rivers but because he was the last of the boatmen—or so he was called—clinging contentiously to his broadhorn long after the steamboats came, when men could no longer be induced to travel in the low wooden ark. The tales about him became an elegy to wild days that were past or passing. He even appeared in literary discussion; one writer said that if he had lived in Greece his feats would have rivaled those of Jason, and that among the Scandinavians he would have become a river god. He was in fact a Mississippi river god, one of those minor deities whom men create in their own image and magnify to magnify themselves. Gradually he grew super-sized; he had eaten a buffalo robe but New England rum had ruined his stomach. He became Mike Finch, Mike Finx, Mike Wing, in a hundred minor tales. Driven at last from the Mississippi, he moved into unknown regions of the farther West, achieving the final glory of heroes, a death wrapped in mystery, indeed many deaths, for the true story was lost and others sprang up.

Mike Fink never attained the nation wide fame of Crockett, nor did he embody so many aspects of life on the frontier, or slip—as Crockett did—into large poetic legend. Emerging as a coonskin [illegible] lower of Jackson, Crockett appeared at first as a settler. In his autobiography the whir of the spinning wheel could be heard, and homely proverbs. "A short horse is soon curried." "If a fellow is born to be hung he will never be drowned." But hog and hominy were soon mixed with air and thunder. Crockett had grinned at what he took to be a raccoon in the topmost branch of a tree but the beast had failed to fall before his spell, and the striped circle proved to be a knot-hole from which his grin had stripped the bark. "Gentlemen," he proclaimed in one of the brief tales, "I'm the darling branch of old Kentuck that can eat up a painter, hold a buffalo out to drink, and put a rifle ball through the moon." He became a myth even in his own lifetime. After his death in 1836 he was boldly appropriated by the popular fancy and appeared thereafter as though he had never died, assuming an even larger legendary stature.

The story of his life in one of the almanacs pictured Crockett as a baby giant planted in a rock bed as soon as he was born and watered with wild buffalo's milk. Another tale declared that as a boy he had tied together the tails of two buffaloes and had carried five tiger cubs in his cap. He had wrung the tail off a comet and announced that he could "travel so all lightnin' fast that I've been known to strike fire against the wind." Lightning glanced through all his stories. By leaping astride the lightning he had once escaped from a tornado on the Mississippi when houses came apart and trees walked out on their roots. Crockett could make lightning by striking his own eye. He could make fire by rubbing a flint with his knuckles. Once he escaped up Niagara Falls on an alligator. "The alligator walked up the great hill of water as slick as a wildcat up a whiteoak."

For the most part Crockett was a wanderer, moving westward, to Texas, across the plains, to California, to Japan—for pearls—and to the South Seas. Diving there, he came to a cave, crawled until he reached dry land in the deepest depths beneath the ocean, made a lamp wick out of his hair, soaked it in elbow grease, and struck a light with his knuckles on a rock.

"Now I tell you what," people would say of some strange happening, "it's nothing to Crockett."

In the end he became a demi-god, or at least a Prometheus.

One January morning it was so all screwen cold that the forest trees were stiff and they couldn't shake, and the very daybreak froze fast as it was trying to dawn. The tinder box in my cabin would no more ketch fire than a sunk raft at the bottom of the sea. Well, seein' daylight war so far behind time I thought creation war in a fair way for freezen fast: so, thinks I, I must strike a little fire from my fingers, light my pipe, an' travel out a few leagues, and see about. Then I brought my knuckles together like two thunderclouds, but the sparks froze up afore I could begin to collect 'em, so out I walked, whistlin' "Fire in the mountains!" as I went along in three double quick time. Well arter I had walked about twenty miles up the Peak o' Day and Daybreak Hill I soon discovered what war the matter. The airth had actually friz fast on her axes, and couldn't turn round; the sun had got jammed between two cakes o' ice under the wheels, an' there he had been shinin' an' workin' to get loose till he friz fast in his cold sweat. C-r-e-a-t-i o n! thought I, this ar the toughest sort of suspension, an' it mustn't be endured. Somethin' must be done, or human creation is done for. It war then so antedeluvian an' premature cold that my upper and lower teeth an' tongue war all collapsed together tight as a friz oyster; but I took a fresh twenty-pound bear off my back that I'd picked up on my road, and beat the animal agin the ice till the hot ile began to walk out on him at all sides. I then took an' held him over the airth's axes an' squeezed him till I'd thawed 'em loose, poured about a ton on't over the sun's face, give the airth's cog-wheel one kick backward till I got the sun loose—whistled "Push along, keep movin'!" an' in about fifteen seconds the airth gave a grunt, an' began movin'. The sun walked up beautiful, salutin' me with sich a wind o' gratitude that it made me sneeze. I lit my pipe by the blaze of his top-knot, shouldered my bear, an' walked home, introducin' people to the fresh daylight with a piece of sunrise in my pocket.

AN exhilarated and possessive consciousness of a new earth and even of the wide universe ran through this tall talk and the tall tales. Inflation appeared with an air of wonder, which became mock wonder at times but maintained the poetic [illegible]e. The Crockett stories distantly approached the [illegible]a of the epic, not merely because of their persist[illegible]t effect of scale or their theme of wandering adventure, but because they embodied something of those interwoven destinies of gods and men which have made the great epical substance.

Around Crockett and Mike Fink faint shapes emerged in a similar large mold. "I saw a little woman streaking it along through the woods like all wrath," said Crockett in one of the almanac stories. Sally Ann Thunder, Ann Whirlwind Crockett wore a hornet's nest trimmed with wolves' tails for a bonnet and a dress of a whole bear's hide with the tail for a train. She could shoot a wild goose flying and wade the Mississippi without wetting her shift. Mike Fink had a huge daughter who could whistle with one corner of her mouth, eat with the other, and scream with the middle, and who had tamed a full-grown bear. Another figure appeared as an occasional companion of Crockett's, Ben Hardin, a well-known character of western Tennessee who claimed that he had been a sailor on far seas and had consorted with mermaids. The outlines of a supernatural hierarchy were sketched in these figures; and beyond them were dim others belonging to local legend who might grow into dynamic stature. At times the animistic took the place of the demigod, appearing in a force which sent squash vines chasing pigs or hoisted a quiet man to the skies by the medium of shrinking leather.

These tales never coalesced into large forms. The more extravagant of the Crockett legends were unattached to the older body of the Crockett story; and they slipped into oblivion, as the almanacs, in which they most frequently appeared, were scattered and lost. On the brink of a wide expression, reaching toward forms that might have partaken of the epical, the popular fancy turned aside—turned to a theme which had always been dominant in the native mind, that of character. Scalawags, gamblers, ne'er do wells, small rapscallions, or mere corncrackers were drawn into a careless net of stories. Crockett appeared widely not as a demigod with a piece of sunrise in his pocket but as a national character who appeared on the stage as Colonel Nimrod Wildfire. Other nationalistic backwoodsman were drawn in popular plays. For a time, in the 'thirties and 'forties, the backwoodsman fairly matched the Yankee of the innumerable Yankee plays in the general view.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Constance Rourke

His eccentricities were considered not only western but American. Leaping, crowing, neighing, boasting, dancing breakdowns, and delivering rhapsodic monologues, he traveled through the country, and even went to England, where this newest portrait of the American was scrutinized with care and considered "pleasing . . . open-hearted . . . childish."

As the portrayals developed a curious circumstance became clear. A Yankee infusion was plain in many of the drawings. Nimrod Wildfire was made the nephew of a Yankee. In "The Gamecock of the Wilderness" the hero was clad in a buckskin shirt with a rooster for a cap; his antics and talk were western. "The devil might dance a reel in my pocket 'thout dangerin' his shins 'ginst silver," he declared; and the inflation belonged to the backwoods. But his name was a composite of western strength and Yankee acumen, and the double strain ran through the character.

In the wake of Wildfire came Sam Patch, a spinner of Pawtucket with an aptitude for jumping whose feats quickly passed into legend. He jumped over Niagara Falls but was unable to jump the Falls of the Genessee, and plunged to the other side of the world, still jumping, and promising to take the shine off the sea serpent when he got back to Boston. Plays were written around him, stories told, poems composed. Clerks called themselves Patch as they leapt over rail fences; men traveled through village streets, jumping. "Some things can be done as well as others," said Sam Patch laconically. The character belonged to the backwoods, but the drawling tone and dry talk were Yankee.

In the mixed portrayals it was always possible to see where the Yankee left off and the backwoodsman began. Yankee humor was gradual in its approaches, pervasive rather than explicit in its quality, low in key, subtle in range. Backwoods drawing was broad, with a distinct bias toward the grotesque, the *macabre,* the rhapsodic. The Yankee of legend might compare himself or another with the weasel or the blacksnake but he never was the weasel or the blacksnake as the backwoodsman was the alligator or the raccoon or the tornado. Yet each indulged in monologue and masquerade. With the deliberate Yankee lingo came an air of listening to an inner voice and the flow of inner fantasy. The exultant "I" of the backwoodsman was accompanied by a flood of fantastic imaginings. Both betrayed a strong element of the self-conscious. Something not quite primitive was mixed with the indubitably primitive.

In that legendary self-portraiture with which the American fancy had been engaged from the Revolution onward other figures had appeared. The Negro was drawn in early minstrelsy with characteristic songs, dances, and animal fables. The transplanted Irishman was pictured in partial sketches, and more faintly the Dutchman and the New York "b'hoy." At times these figures seemed to merge, as if some primary intention were at work to create a single national type; most often they drew apart, as though the elements after all were disparate. The Yankee, the backwoodsman, the Negro made the dominant trio.

Around each accumulated innumerable popular tales, songs, legends, bits of characteristic talk, which fell into groups and even into cycles. Fantasy was the basis for all this lore, however often it might appropriate homely speech and native metaphor. It was striated with comedy, or embodied at times those antithetical moods of horror or terror out of which comedy had sprung as in relief on all frontiers or on the farther frontier of the sea. It constantly reached toward the supernatural. It was spread by strolling actors who wandered up and down the land at the heels of the pioneer; it was spread by almanacs and newspapers, by interchanges on stagecoaches, river boats, and in taverns. It made a widely diffused popular possession that reached its first bold outlines in the late '20's and early '30's, and was to continue for at least a generation more.

Full of improvisation, this comic lore used the primary stuffs of literature, the theatre that lies behind the drama, the tale that has preceded both the drama and the novel, the monologue and the rhapsody that have been a rudimentary source for many forms. It constantly hung on the verge of a wider or deeper expression; yet it was drawn back, as if magnetized, to the primitive and even the archaic. Such preludes have existed for all literatures, in songs and primitive ballads and a folk theatre and rude chronicles. Great writers have drawn directly from such sources; inevitably genius embraces popular moods and formulations even when it seems to range farthest afield. The primitive base may be full of coarse and fragmentary elements, full of grotesquerie and brutality; it may be remote from the wide and tranquil concepts of a great art; but it provides materials and most of all the impulses for fresh life and continuance.

SCANT, fitful, and sporadic as American literature has proved to be, it has had roots in a common soil. A literature was produced which, like other literatures, is related to an anterior folklore. Without those lusty, undirected energies which had persistently maintained the sense of legend Melville hardly could have created "Moby Dick"; the primitive legend-making faculty lies at its base, with something conscious and indwelling that had also appeared on popular levels. Melville drew upon an accumulated lore of the sea, much of it comic, all of it close to the tall tales of the western frontier. Among these was one which ran close to the main outline of "Moby Dick," describing the comic adventures of a backwoodsman who sought a fabulously large bear, the Big Bear of Arkansas, in revenge of depredations. Tragic as its theme became, passages of comic fantasy were strewn through "Moby Dick" as through all of Melville's earlier narratives, in forms akin to those of popular lore, moving toward the *macabre,* the grotesque, the extravagant.

As though it were possessed by the very essence of a wilful comic spirit, American literature often turned away from the materials of the comic mythologies; no direct sequence followed from them, no orderly completion. But the forms of this new literature were those which had been slowly channeled out by humor: they were the rhapsody, the monologue, the tale. The rhapsody arose unmistakably in Melville. Whitman sustained the rhapsody as his major form. However freely or subtly, Emerson and Whitman and even Thoreau used the habitual native monologue (in Emerson touched by rhapsody) which portrayed the generic rather than the individual character. The tale was a primary form in this literature, infused by fantasy, turning toward the supernatural: Poe and Hawthorne persistently used these effects; and both drew upon those dark and harsh emotions from which comedy had seemed to spring as in relief. Poe revealed a gross and inhuman comedy not unlike that of the frontier, with his habitual magnification and mystification, his stress upon the grotesque and the *macabre,* his hoaxes like "Hans Pfall" and his burlesques like "King Pest." Because Poe himself often stressed the *frisson,* terror has overtopped comedy in the general apprehension of his tales, but their entire gamut of moods might have been drawn from the West, plumbing horror, yet turning also to a wild contrived humor. Whatever the foreign influences upon Poe, however esoterically he used his materials, he possessed, as Woodberry said, "a contemporaneous mind," which was deeply touched by popular moods and emotions.

As genius must, both Poe and Hawthorne passed immeasurably beyond popular approaches and gave these fresh values. Elements of the conscious or self-conscious which had been dominant in comic lore they transformed into delicate revelations of the inner mind. Poe used the first person continually, adopting this in part perhaps to gain an impulse toward exploration of states of mind or feeling which were undoubtedly his own, and revealing these in the simple and magnified terms of fantasy. "William Wilson" is half fantasy, half revelation of the obscure envelopments of memory. Hawthorne transformed regional legends into revelations of inner moods. In the passage of "The Scarlet Letter," describing the minister's impulses as he passed among his people after the meeting with Hester in the wood, Hawthorne attained a prophetic discernment: here was a brief and effortless exposure of grotesque inner license, portrayed in those terms of fantasy which had belonged to popular lore, embodying movements of the mind as these were to appear in modern literature, that is, as direct revelation. No doubt Puritan influences created something of the bent toward inner scrutiny in Hawthorne. But at his finest he never used the abstract and analytical formulations of the Puritan: he chose the direct and earthy mode, as in the passage on Dimmesdale's fantasies; and there at least he slipped into an irreverent rude comedy far from the conscious Puritan habit.

Concern with the inner view was dominant among the few great writers of this time. The movement toward soliloquy appeared in the writings of Emerson and Thoreau, and reached a culmination in Whitman, whose finest poems are cast in the deep and delicate form. Whitman used the monologue or the rhapsody turned inward without analysis: moods, shades of feeling, fragments of thought, pour out in an untrammeled stream which is often not far from the so-called stream of consciousness. Melville betrayed the same bias again and again: soliloquy, reverie, "supernatural surmisings" are mingled with outer happenings in his idyllic early novels as in "Moby Dick."

With the pronounced drift of this literature toward the conscious, the self-aware, the inner fantasy, went another which had seldom or never been combined with subtleties: that which moved toward the epical or the heroic. Whitman achieved the heroic in form and in broad intention. The epical scope was encompassed by Melville in "Moby Dick" as he portrayed an encounter which may rightly be called an encounter between gods and men, with an infusion of the animistic that had appeared on the levels of comic folk-lore.

An imaginative force had been loosed, powerful enough to attempt new and wide inclusions but not to complete them in abundance. Large modes had been created, yet their looming outlines were often only sketched. Half designs, cartoons, were drawn and left incomplete: Hawthorne's voluminous notebooks were a symbol, as was Whitman's perpetual rewriting of his poems and the single great achievement of Melville. Nor did these primary writers attract those pursuant groups of minor artists who usually follow in the wake of a great movement and give it amplitude and variation. The result perhaps was not quite a literature but the bold outlines of one, a kind of *ursprünglich* accumulation.

Most literatures have had slowly accumulated sources upon which to draw; but the lore which here had been a source was merely defined when the first of these writers arose; much of their accomplishment ran parallel to its expansion. Only Melville and Whitman, coming last, could touch this with unconscious freedom; and even they fairly matched it in point of time. Quick draughts, a breathless haste may have been final causes of incompletion. Yet it was no meagre effort which could attempt the creation of a literature while a basic folk-lore was in the making; and its direction was its own, in the mingling of primitive elements with the indwelling and self-aware. Surely the move toward the heroic, not once but in a whole aspect of expression, was a radical accomplishment in a modern world. Not the realistic temper but the poetic temper was at work. A homogeneous world of the imagination had been created in which popular fancies and those of genius were loosely knit together. The same character was at work on both levels.

* * *

The foregoing article is in substance though not in form identical with a chapter in Miss Rourke's "American Humor," which Harcourt, Brace is to issue this week. Miss Rourke is the author of two earlier books, "Trumpets of Jubilee," a study of Henry Ward Beecher and other celebrities of American religious history, and "Troupers of the Gold Coast, or The Rise of Lotta Crabtree."

A water color of Thackeray, by Eyre Crowe, the painter who helped the novelist for many years as his secretary, taking down "Esmond" from dictation, is shortly to be sold at auction at Sotheby's, in London. It is believed to have been painted in America during one of Thackeray's lecture tours. It shows him standing in a glade with a background of trees. He is bareheaded, smoking a cigar, has an umbrella under his arm, and looks cheerful in the sun's glare.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some Recent Fiction

Conflicting Standards

EAST WIND: WEST WIND. By PEARL S. BUCK. New York: The John Day Co. 1930. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALICE TISDALE HOBART
Author of "Pidgin Cargo"

UNTIL we read "East Wind: West Wind" we had always thought that the only novel on China which a Westerner could hope to write with accuracy was the psychological novel depicting the interplay between Eastern and Western minds. To the Chinese, we felt, must be left the telling of the story of China's home life. In the partriarchal home of China the relations of the sexes are so different from ours, and these relations are so closely guarded from the eyes of the Westerner, that it seemed to me an impossibility for the Westerner to see behind the scene far enough to know the mental and emotional reactions of the Chinese in the intimate relations of love and marriage.

Now Mrs. Buck, an American, has undertaken this seemingly impossible task. That she had succeeded to so marked a degree is due, we think, to the fact that she was born and bred in China and has for many years been a careful student of China's own fiction. She brings also to her task a rare and delicate understanding of human nature.

She had taken for her theme the conflict between the old and young in a patriarchal family. The story is told in the first person by Kwei-lan, rigidly reared according to the standards of old China. After her marriage, she finds herself faced with the difficulty of pleasing a husband who has lived for many years away from his own country and these standards. He does not admire or love Kwei-lan, the docile, decorative but, according to his new standards, ignorant wife with whom his family has presented him. Her effort to break away from the old customs and beliefs in which she has been reared in order that she may win the love of her husband, the hopeless struggles of her brother to get the family to accept his American bride, make the often poignant scenes of the story. Throughout, Mrs. Buck writes with dignity, treating her subject with the respect a careful student would.

Her characterization of Kwei-lan's mother, head wife in the great partriarchal family, is admirable. This Chinese matriarch takes powerful shape as one reads. Through Kwei-lan's eyes, always through Kwei-lan's eyes, we see the mother's harsh, unyielding determination to subjugate her beloved son to the demands of the family, her silent, tenacious struggle to separate him from his American wife, abhorrent in her eyes, and through Kwei-lan's tears we see the matriarch, in despair when she fails, lie down and die. She is Chinese to the core.

So is the matriarch's husband. He is exceedingly well done, drawn in half tones at first as Kwei-lan, the sheltered girl, sees him, then, as the struggle goes on and Kwei-lan becomes more mature, the weak, pleasure-loving man is sketched in bold strokes. And Mrs. Buck has given us with great fidelity the miasmic atmosphere of the patriarchal family peopled with the women beautiful, base, and lazy, that the august patriarch brings home for his head wife, Kwei-lan's mother, to rule.

But we think Mrs. Buck has not been so happy in her portrayal of Kwei-lan and the two young men. Kwei-lan is too innocent for a girl brought up in the very enlightening atmosphere of her father's several wives. And Kwei-lan, her husband, and her brother are not altogether Chinese. Their acceptance of Western ways has tricked Mrs. Buck into endowing them with Western psychology. At least so it seems to us. They are young and hopeful as the youth of a new country are young and hopeful. You have only to read "A Son of China," written by a Chinese, to see how different the psychology is. Mrs. Buck's young Chinese struggle against objective tradition. In "A Son of China" you feel Sheng-Cheng twisted and tormented from within as well as from without. He is not only fighting tradition laid upon him by his elders, but tradition running in his very life stream. Notwithstanding that Mrs. Buck's young people seem not altogether Chinese, she gives us much understanding of young China's problems, although marrying a Western woman is not often one of them.

See page 676 for the review of Mrs. Buck's new novel of China, "The Good Earth."

Two Houses

ROCK AND SAND. By JOHN RATHBONE OLIVER. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1930. $2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

ONE may greatly enjoy this novel without knowing anything about the author, or recognizing anything of what he is really doing in this latest work from his busy pen. The casual reader may notice a certain artificial parallelism in the story which is suspicious. If he is critical, he may conclude that there is defective execution in the fact that the two contrasted strands of material out of which the design is fashioned, never successfully intertwine. His mind may surprise him by clinging to fragmentary chapters and episodes, and a character or two, and by promptly losing all memory of and even interest in the narrative as a whole. But there are chapters of gripping dramatic intensity, there are exciting episodes a-plenty, there is a stage set with the romantic scenery of the Laurentian hills of Canada, there are attractive players drawn from the native population of this remote and primitive region, there are conflict and struggle, virtue and vice, reward and punishment. All the material of a stirring novel is present—most of it the same precious stuff that went into the making of Hémon's "Maria Chapdelaine." If not in the same high class with its unforgettable Canadian predecessor, "Rock and Sand" has merits of its own and will be enjoyed by many a grateful reader.

But to those who are famiiliar with Dr. Oliver and his earlier writings, this book has an interest apart from that of its character and worth as a piece of fiction. "Four Square," Dr. Oliver's remarkable autobiography, showed a man who, in addition to being a penologist and a university teacher, was a professional psychiatrist and an ordained priest of religion. The deepest quality of his being is unquestionably his piety. He boasts himself a medievalist who is spiritually in revolt against modern life, and is yearning for a restoration of the mystic beliefs and practices of the age of faith which are alone preserved in our time by the Roman Catholic church. It is this "concern," as the Quakers put it, rather than any primary interest in the art of fiction as an interpretation of life, which dictated this novel. What Dr. Oliver did in "Fear" and "Victim and Victor," he has now done once again; he has adorned a tale in order to teach a moral, this time with full stress upon the beneficent tradition of Catholic Christianity.

The fable turns upon the summer visits year after year of the members of a typical American family to a remote Canadian village in the Province of Quebec. Here they meet with the simple folk of the countryside, born and reared in the primitive Roman faith, and ruled by the kindly yet stern discipline of the resident curé. The Americans, with one exception, are a weak and frivolous lot. The husband, a shadowy figure, is an adulterer, and is divorced in the course of the tale; the wife is empty, snobbish, neurotic, cowardly; the son is a well-intentioned but dissipated youth; only the daughter has character, but this misdirected and unstable. Meeting pains and tragedies, these typical moderns of the most modern of all countries go to pieces, while the simple Canadian peasants, meeting the same pains and tragedies, withstand them with patience, serenity, and courage. Whence comes the stamina, the heroism, of the native stock? Why this difference between the sophisticated American society folk, who collapse under pressure, and the simple men and women of the village, who, having done all, withstand? Dr. Oliver finds his answer in the fact that the American Protestants have lost their faith, their God, whereas the Catholic peasants, unspoiled by the empty materialism of the age, can still trust in the Divine Spirit and live in the virtues it imparts. Our house is built on the sand—theirs on the rock!

Dr. Oliver's book is propaganda. To state this is not to condemn it. Tolstoy's "Resurrection" is propaganda; so also, for that matter, is the immortal "War and Peace." But whereas the great Russian has given us life in its entirety and revealed the laws which control its processes, this author has selected certain specific phenomena of life which may or may not be typical, and has artificially arranged them to his purpose. He finds in life not what is necessarily there, but what, like the juggler's rabbit, is there because first carefully placed there. As a story, the book is unexceptionable; as a thesis, it is unconvincing.

Colette, the French author, is arranging to have her novel "La Vagabonde" filmed. She will be assisted in the production by her daughter. It is possible that this will be the first of a series of films based on her novels.

Romance and Adventure!

The
UNCERTAIN TRAVELLER
***by* John Fisher**

THIS is the story of Youth in search for an experience which would satisfy the restless craving of his inner self. First, fighting with Garibaldi for freedom under Italian skies—then seeking new experiences to build up his shattered dreams, on the American prairie of the Forties. Exciting, dramatic, it portrays perfectly the glamorous days of the wagon trains trekking westward. But love of Sophie turned Frank Bentley from gold and California, to Oregon—and then he found what he sought. $2.00

MORROW, New York

"... by all odds the most outstanding poetry that has come under our eye this week."
—WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT in "Round About Parnassus"

GREEN RIVER
A Poem for Rafinesque
by JAMES WHALER

The *Saturday Review of Literature* has previously commented on James Whaler's work: "This man has observed as a native, with keen artistic relish; he has something of Robert Frost's gift for thoroughly honest description with the smack of originality. Stuff of strong grain, admirably fresh and authentic." In GREEN RIVER, the poet has turned to the long narrative form to tell the romantic tale of Constantine Rafinesque, great botanist and nature-lover. It is a memorable story, told in swift, passionate verse, interspersed by some of the finest lyrical writing in modern poetry. $2.00

GERMAN LYRIC POETRY
by NORMAN MAC LEOD

Describes and illustrates with some sixty examples the development of the German lyric from the twelfth century to the present day. In the "Hogarth Lectures on Literature." $1.25

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY — **MODERN BRITISH POETRY**
Edited by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

These two anthologies of modern verse lead the field. In the revised editions, they are outstanding for their breath of scope, wealth of inclusion and for their editorial equipment. Excellent for Easter gifts. *Each*, $3.50

Harcourt, Brace and Company
383 Madison Avenue New York

to find true culture in a new and different attitude toward everyday things.
Four weeks after publication, Dr. Charles Gray Shaw's appealing book has become a Best Seller, won thousands of readers, and attained four editions. The fifth is now in preparation.
Critical acclaim throughout the country is represented by *The New York Times*, which says: "*The Road to Culture* is so clearly thought out and so reasonably presented that its intellectual appeal is as striking as its literary charm."

THE ROAD TO CULTURE
by CHARLES GRAY SHAW

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY *Publishers*
$2.00

A SPECIALIST IN BOOKS
will procure for you without loss of time or extra expense
THE BOOK YOU WANT
New, Old, Rare or First Edition
Sporting Items and Fine Bindings
Advice in Selection
Write or Wire
WINIFRED R. LELAND
57 West 58th Street, New York City

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MILTIADES
Eldest son of Ol' Man Jimmie. Confederate officer. Lover of Gracie, the slave girl. Suitor for the hand of Drusilla Lacefield, heiress. Jilted, he married Ponny BeShears, daughter of the cross-roads storekeeper.
AUGUSTUS VAIDEN
Brother of Miltiades. Confederate volunteer. Wounded in the first skirmish because he had never heard of a repeating rifle. Fell in with horse thieves.
POLYCARP VAIDEN
Brother of Augustus. Confederate spy Came through safely, only to be shot to death in carpetbagger reprisals against the Ku Klux Klan.
LAURA VAIDEN
Wife of James Vaiden. She bore him ten children—helped run his Alabama farm —considered her family equals of the Lacefields, superiors to the BeShears.
MISS CASSANDRA
The blue-stocking of the family. A strict old maid of the '60's. She ruled the Vaiden household with an iron will—read Paine's The Rights of Man on hot summer afternoons
MARCIA VAIDEN
For years she kept A. Gray Lacefield dangling at her apron-strings. Yet when Jerry Catlin came back ill from a Southern prison, she married him, "poor white" and Federal though he was.
JAMES VAIDEN, "Ol' Pap"
He was the pioneer. First a blacksmith, then a landowner. A meat-eating, primitive, hardshelled Baptist. He was absolute monarch of his white-washed home (half fort, half house)—his children, his negroes, even the stray dogs of his Alabama farm. To him the Civil War was the end of the established world.
GRACIE
The octoroon slave girl. "I want to die in the arms of my daughter," said Ol' Pap on his death-bed. He did—but it was Gracie, not Marcia, who held him.

THE FORGE

by T. S. Stribling

This book is a saga of such people as have formed the backbone of nations. In Germany they are the Buddenbrooks — in England, the Forsytes — in America, the Vaidens . . . They were a rugged family of the South. They saw a civilization crumble under their hands. Their story is "loaded with action." (*N. Y. Sun*) — "makes history a personal affair." (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune*) — the greatest novel by the author of TEEFTALLOW and BIRTHRIGHT. Just Published. $2.50 DOUBLEDAY, DORAN.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Round about Parnassus

By William Rose Benét

TWO interesting books dealing with poets by now well established are "The Melody of Chaos," by Houston Peterson, which comes to us from Longmans, Green, and "Imagism and the Imagists," by Glenn Hughes, published by the Stanford University Press. The purpose of the former book is expressed in Mr. Peterson's brief preface, in which he says, among other things:

> While completing a few years ago "Havelock Ellis: Philosopher of Love," which might have been called "a study in serenity," I decided to write a contrasting study in complexity and chaos, with the poetry of Conrad Aiken as my point of departure and principal theme. As Ellis's work represented for me the highest spiritual achievement of the previous generation, the writings of Aiken seemed to embody the present sense of confusion, helplessness, despair.

This is fairly true of Aiken. Mr. Peterson analyzes his poetry exhaustively. Prior to a biography of the poet which could not properly appear until some years after his death, this is likely to remain the most important study of Aiken's work that we will have. Chapter headings such as "Mania Psychologica," "Nympholepsy," "Vicarious Experience," "The Net of Self," "Clown," and "The Dance of Death," indicate aspects of Aiken's work perfectly familiar to all who have followed the career of the poet. The question of whether Aiken actually ranks high enough to be accorded so thorough-going an examination is beside the point. He has afforded a perfect example of the type of mind Mr. Peterson thinks extremely significant of our time. Whether or not Mr. Peterson overstates the case is also of not so much importance in that there is plenty of ground for his attitude. He ends with praise for what he calls Aiken's "splendid nihilism." The epithet is badly chosen. Actual nihilism may stir one to awe, to terror, and impart a number of emotions. But contemplation of the starless gulf cannot properly be called the contemplation of splendor. Aiken's melodious work frequently fills one with pity for the bitterness of life and the torture of human beings. His lyric gift often enchants. But his work is not splendid in any sense. A great deal of it is nebulous, though of late years there has been a steady increase in trenchancy, and he has developed more than one aspect of a nature compact of many gifts. We advise a reading of the book as one of the most interesting studies of a modern poet that we have encountered recently.

Mr. Glenn Hughes takes up, in his study of modern poetry, the original imagist group, namely, Aldington and H. D. Fletcher and Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, F. S. Flint, and T. E. Hulme. Part One of his book deals with the origins of imagism, imagism as a movement, and what the critics thought of it. Part Two is a series of biographical sketches. They are sympathetic and informed. A good bibliography and index complete the book. It is a volume that should go up on one's shelf devoted to the history of modern poetry. Next to D. H. Lawrence the most remarkable development of all the poets included has been Aldington's post-war appearances in prose. In fact, it is quite likely that some of his prose fiction will endure when all but a few of his poems have found oblivion. As a matter of fact, for a single poem, F. S. Flint's swan poem is about as good as anything Aldington has done, which is praise for both. Pound has always had a more salient individuality in his verse, when he was not overcome by Browning. "H. D.," as Mr. Hughes notes, has remained the same to a degree beyond any other member of the group. She is still in her cool Attic temple, nourishing a perfection that was apparent even in some of her earliest work. There has been no development, no mental growth, there has merely been a continuing practice of maturing craftsmanship. In some ways Fletcher has shown more potentiality as a poet than any of them, and yet so far he has not quite accomplished what we had hoped. His mind is as alert as Aldington's, as rebellious, as salty. The portraits in the book—there is one of each poet—reveal an interesting set of faces, most of them fine and sensitive. These were they of the vanguard nearly twenty years ago. We salute them as they pass.

Alfred A. Knopf has made a most charming looking volume of Humbert Wolfe's "Early Poems," which will be out in a few days. Wolfe has been a remarkable manifestation, in that his extreme facility has not prevented him from producing some excellent poetry. This is not true of a good deal of the work presented here. It has little bite, little salience, somehow, though it is all very cleverly done. The preface begins, "Like ghostly hansom-cabs, delicately ringing round a midnight corner, these first poems of mine slip back into the welter of taxi-cabs, motor-buses, and all the rapid traffic of contemporary violence." And that is just about it. In general, his themes do not seem very interesting, the phraseology in no way strikes one as inspired; the poems are presentable, but no more. There are indications of his more satiric vein, and though they are certainly not brilliant, there is pith to certain of the London sonnets, as witness:

THE STREETS BEHIND THE TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

The quiet folk who live in Kensington
Mothers of pleasant girls and worthy wives
Living at ease their comfortable lives
Don't think what roots their homes are built upon,
Don't think, or wouldn't listen if you showed
That beyond cure by love or change by hate
Like hooded lepers at each corner wait,
The streets behind the Tottenham Court Road.
Row upon row the phantom houses stain
The sweetness of the air and not a day
Dies, but some woman's child turns down that way
Along those streets and is not seen again.
And only God can in his mercy say
Which is more cruel, Kensington or they.

We have been interested in a study of T. S. Eliot by Thomas McGreevy which has come to us at the author's request from Chatto & Windus in London. While we do not wholly agree with Mr. McGreevy's analysis it is well worth reading concerning one of the most strangely interesting of modern poets. Say what one may about Eliot, there remains an accent of greatness upon his poems, even when as wholes they are not successful. He is far from being a perfect poet, but he is an intensely original one and always has been.

From the Grayhound Press, St. Cross, Winchester, England, comes a broadside ballad by Monk Gibbon, charmingly illustrated by hand by Picart Le Doux. It seems that Gibbon's work is well known in England on account of the Grayhound Press's two previous publications, "The Tremulous String" (twenty-five prose poems), and "The Branch of Hawthorn Tree," a volume of poems of which all the copies printed have now been sold. A volume of Gibbon's work was also published in 1929 by Victor Gollancz; Gibbon has contributed to various journals, and in 1928 he was awarded the Tailteann Medal at Dublin. As for Picart Le Doux, he is celebrated in France for his illustrations to modern books and to Verlaine's poetry, as also for his paintings in the Paris Salon. The price of Gibbon's ballad is six shillings, and no copies will be sent unless full remittance accompanies each order. Booksellers are given thirty-three percent discount. We like to encourage the publication and sale of such ballads, and Mr. Gibbon's is both charming and tuneful.

The Harbor Press of New York has made a most attractive little book of Joan Ramsay's poems, "Horns in Velvet," which collection was chosen as the prize-winner from among six hundred manuscripts submitted in the Harbor Press poetry contest. Miss Ramsay, it seems, is a young American who spent much of her childhood in England and has more recently lived in California and New York. She has decided promise. "Parting Shot" is, for instance, a finely spirited and refreshing sonnet. But we prefer to quote here one which we can vouch for as a perfectly accurate picture. It concerns the part of town in which we live, and it, too, ought to be put on a broadside with illustrations by, say, Peggy Bacon. It explains completely why we choose to live in that part of town:

GREENWICH VILLAGE DUSK

Jefferson Market clock is nearing seven—
Its broad face like a genial moon—less far
Than that which hangs between the nearest star
And Eighth Street — beams from a less haughty heaven
On the slow traffic thick along uneven
Wood-paved Sixth Avenue—car behind car
Crawling with bump and stop and jerk and jar
Northward and southward as the green light's given.

Windows are bright in all the little shops—
Delicatessen, drugstore, bakery—
Artists are buying cheese, old women tea,
Young couples hurrying home to cook their chops;
And cats come out among the chimney-tops
To sing the songs of lovers and the free.

Miss Ramsay has contributed to such magazines as *The Century* and *The Commonweal*. We wish her godspeed.

NEW MACMILLAN BOOKS

"By all odds the best book yet in its field"

The Economic Life of Soviet Russia
By CALVIN B. HOOVER
Third Printing
"Affords the best and most comprehensive view of Soviet policies and their application now obtainable."—*New York Times* $3.00

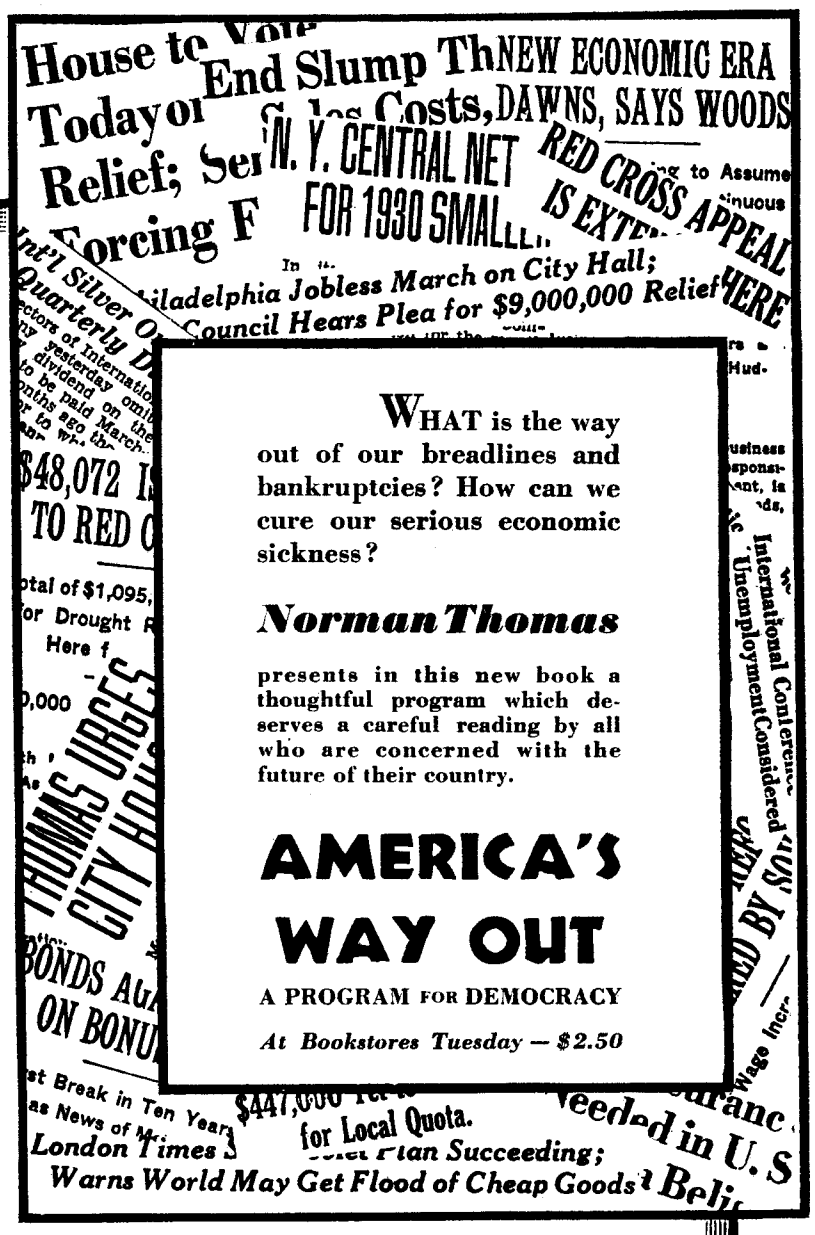
The X Y Z of Communism
By ETHAN T. COLTON
A straightforward exposition of the events and results of the Soviet experiment, as seen during many years of residence in Russia. $3.00

Hard Times:
The Way in and the Way Out
By RICHARD T. ELY
The Dean of American economists diagnoses our current state and offers some suggestions on what may be done. $1.75

●

for entertainment

Murder at Bridge
By ANNE AUSTIN
Second Printing
The smart hostess will include this best-selling mystery story among her next bridge prizes. Anne Austin, author of *Murder Backstairs*, gives you a baffling situation in the murder of Nita Selim, late of Broadway, who is killed while the final hand of a bridge game is being played. $2.00



WHAT is the way out of our breadlines and bankruptcies? How can we cure our serious economic sickness?

Norman Thomas

presents in this new book a thoughtful program which deserves a careful reading by all who are concerned with the future of their country.

AMERICA'S WAY OUT
A PROGRAM FOR DEMOCRACY
At Bookstores Tuesday — $2.50

Coming March 26

The Stars in Their Courses
By SIR JAMES JEANS
An entertaining, copiously illustrated journey through the amazing wonders of the heavens, with one of the greatest living astronomers, author of *The Mysterious Universe* and *The Universe Around Us*. Probable price $3.00

The Little Entente
By JOHN O. CRANE
An informing book on the entente that has promoted the welfare of middle Europe. $2.50

Christina Rossetti
By DOROTHY M. STUART
A new volume in *The English Men of Letters Series*; a lively story of a unique personality. $1.50

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY ~ 60 Fifth Avenue ~ NEW YORK

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Letter from France

By ABEL CHEVALLEY

THESE letters from France do not aim at being a periodical epitome of our literary output. The books which everybody has read or heard of can be left to take care of themselves. I am more concerned about those which run the risk of being overlooked in spite of their intrinsic worth. I do not believe that literary justice is always and inevitably done; while the task of crowning the victors will never be left undone.

It is true that success—even purely commercial success—is a fact that we are all bound to take into consideration. But even achievement, as distinct from mere success, depends upon a consensus. The world of letters lives in a state of permanent referendum: "Who is supreme in this or that department of literature?" My business is not to say "Vote for X or Z," but only to whisper: "I am an outsider. If I were a voter, a full-fledged citizen, I would consider the claims of Y. And you shall know why."

M. Floris Delattre is the Y that I have at present in mind. If you come across "L'Angleterre et le Conflict Houiller," (Colin) you will discover that it is not necessary to erect a dangerous scaffolding of generalizations, even cemented by elastic statistics, in order to account for the parlous state of the English economic situation at the present time. M. Floris Delattre was an eye-witness of the General Strike in 1926 which ended in a fiasco. From that concrete experience, he has extracted all the elements of the ensuing situation, still fraught with danger. A big book, solid, leisurely, not reducible to formulæ.

I sometimes feel that all the "national psychologies" and "sociologies" at present published do no good except to their authors. They all start from the point of view not of humanity but of nationality, and exacerbate instead of attenuating that feeling of irreducible "difference" between states which is at the root of most of our troubles.

The reception of Marshal Pétain by the French Academy was as free from that feeling as could be hoped under the circumstances.

He is not only a great man of war but a great man. His power lies in his intense "humanity." He not only saved Verdun in 1916, but also saved, in 1917, the soul and mind of the French army, then terribly shattered by wanton attacks, unnecessary hardships, and senseless mutinies. He reconciled two million men with themselves and restored their self-respect. Pétain reconquered at that time more than a fortress or a province. The sense of justice, the intense feeling of love for the common soldier that inspired him at that time, are infused into his speech, and though he is neither eloquent by nature nor versed in the art of literary expression, it was one of the best ever heard under the Cupola.

Paul Valéry, who replied to Marshal Pétain's speech, rose to equal heights of reason and eloquence. But it was from another side and by other ways. Some of his admissions are worth noting, coming from the most purely "intellectual" poet of this time; for instance. . . : "The true value of intelligence consists in the faculty of allowing oneself to be taught by facts." The end of his speech, on the stupidity of expecting concord from politics and peace from war, was drowned in applause. He stigmatized the spirit of national contention and rivalry, gently rebuked those "who think that we French have too much gold, too many guns, too much territory," and that we are perversely wrong to be what we are. He appealed to all that is human in humanity to save us from a new disaster. "Is man, though lucid and reasonable, incapable of sacrificing his hatreds to his sufferings? Shall we always behave like a swarm of senseless and wretched insects, hopelessly attracted by a flame?" You will perceive a feeling of wistful doubt and apprehension in these last words of his speech.

Literary critics are getting tired of registering, year after year, the decisions of more or less competent juries awarding prizes which confer on the laureates a more or less durable measure of celebrity. Maurice Bedel has just published "Phillippine" (Gallimard), an amusing skit on Fascism. It is rather thin broth though full of fun, and, in some places, quite in the manner of dear, forgotten Anatole France. But who remembers that Maurice Bedel was once a Goncourt laureate?

There are perhaps half a dozen novelists whose names are pretty sure to reach posterity. Roger Martin du Gard is, I think, one of them. André Gide is another. Not less than three score have been "discovered" and made famous within the last ten years by literary juries such as the Goncourt Academy, Femina, Renaissance, etc., and about three hundred prizes are awarded annually. At this rate, immortality will be at a discount among our great grandnephews. The Goncourt laureate of 1931 was Henri Fauconnier. He is now about fifty and has lived a long time in the Malay States, growing rubber. His book "Malaisie" (Stock) is not so much a novel as a romantic essay on the life and mind of Malay, so far as it is accessible to white people; a disquisition on the weakness and torments of post-war mentality in the Occident, revealed by contact with the Orient.

In this respect, André Malvaux's "Voie Royale," (Grasset) is a greater, stronger, more dramatic effort, and recalls Conrad at his best. But I prefer "Les Conquerants" by the same author, published two years ago. André Malvaux has been through some of the dangerous adventures which he relates. He and Fauconnier are men of action whose books were lived before being written.

The latest book by Jean Giraudoux, "Les Aventures de Jérome Bardini" (Emile Paul) is the story of a man who tries to escape not only from all social ties but from the prison of his own self. He emigrates to New York in order to get rid of the last shreds of what was once his personality. A double-edged compliment to your great city, but I know New Yorkers who settle in Paris for the same purpose. The theme of "L'Evasion" is now trite. But Giraudoux's incredible aptitude to invent new metaphors renovates whatever he touches. The book is made up of an introduction and two episodes: Stephy and the Kid. The girl Stephy is ready to accept all the social ties from which Bardini has shaken himself free, provided that once only she can satisfy her lifelong yearning for adventure and mystery. But these two falling in love with each other awake in themselves the slumbering forces of tradition. They must unite, marry, and in consequence reveal their outer as well as their inner identity. Love takes them back to the prison of family and society. Love does not emancipate. Stephy withdraws.

Then Bardini meets the Kid, a mere boy, an orphan, alone, hungry, desperate, hating life and men. Here is at last the perfect, the absolute outcast. Jerome adopts the Kid. But once more society interferes. The Kid is wrenched from Bardini. One of the last episodes, near Niagara Falls, is especially dramatic. The conclusion seems to be that escape is only a dream to be dreamt. All men born of woman are prisoners both of themselves and others. If you know Giraudoux at all, if you have read were it only a single page from his pen, you know that this bald analysis is misleading. It is useless to try and sum up his stories. Their charm, their power, their freshness, the iridescence of their texture, is unconveyable. He is not a mere artist in words, an inventor of preciosities. His faceted style is but the result of his faceted view of life. He belongs to a world of delightful unreality, "un monde de rapports sans supports"; he is the true representative of relativity in today's literature.

La *Nouvelle Revue Critique* has published two series each containing twelve short biographical and critical studies of living authors: Claudel, Farrère, Gide, Giraudoux, Valéry, Dorgelès, Duhamel, etc. These series can be recommended to whoever wishes to become acquainted, more closely than by occasional reviews, with the characteristics of the best and most widely known among French writers. They are neither panegyrics nor disparagements of the authors concerned. Most of them breathe that interested detachment which is the proper attitude of criticism.

"La Découverte des Américains," by René Puaux, is to America what "The French at Home," by Philip Carr, is to France: an intelligent, friendly and, on the whole, successful attempt to picture, instead of the abstract nation, those living, concrete, and various units that constitute a given nation. René Puaux's book was first published in *Le Temps*. He had been invited, like many others, by the Carnegie Peace Endowment on a long trip across the Atlantic, and all through the States, and he evidently enjoyed the treat. Though he was not forced to write the usual "Account of Your Holiday," he did it, and did it well, and bagged as an extra the Strassburger Prize. I have read with great interest his good-humored and unpretentious but not unimportant book. It is refreshing to find somebody who has not a ready made system of America to force down your throat. Scientific "explanations" of a country are like all others. They contain nothing that was not there before, at least in essence; that has not been postulated, or introduced. They bring nothing new. You cannot pull a cat out of the bag without first having the cat, and, what is worse, bagging her. There is an element of jugglery in all these "explanations." They are, by nature, mere ex-tensions, un-foldings, developments. That is one of the reasons why my heart goes to a Discovery of Americans, rather than a Discovery of America. In men only lies the imprevisible. If you merely want to make him understand, you can bamboozle your reader. If your object is to make us feel, I can't be fooled. I shall or shall not answer your impulse. But if I do, nothing can shake me. What I have felt I cannot un-feel. A thing felt is a thing conquered.

Men like Mistral who have really no great intellectual or factual importance will keep alive a long time because of their conjuring power. We have just been celebrating his centenary.

"A grand book."
Wm. Allen White.

Here is a new kind of African book, written, not by a hunter or explorer, but by a woman doctor who has lived with the dark people of the jungle, known their secrets, shared their lives. . . . Far within the Heart of the Hungry Country, Dr. Miller made her home . . . King Kuma Kanga visited her in state with four of his thirty-six wives . . . Pygmies, shyest of the jungle creatures, came hundreds of miles to see her, and proud warriors shared with her their jungle lore . . . She pitted her craft against savage witch doctors and sat on a native jury to deal with cases of the Evil Eye . . . From her forest home, she heard tom-toms beat and saw elephants come noiselessly out of the night like great grey phantoms . . . Africa . . . the real Africa . . . lives in the pages of her book.

JUNGLES PREFERRED

BY DR. JANET MILLER

$3.50 - - - Houghton Mifflin Company - - - $3.50

JONATHAN LEONARD

Considered by many to be the most original writer in America today, the author of ***Back to Stay*** has written his finest and most extraordinary novel

Sympathetic to Bare Feet

The reckless tale of a girl's experiments in love and of the futile elders who sit in judgment upon her. $2.50

THE VIKING PRESS : NEW YORK

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A new edition of
a great historical novel

The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci

By DMITRI MEREJKOWSKI

The glamour, the intrigue, and the fascination of the Italian Renaissance have never been pictured so vividly as by Merejkowski in his famous novel of Leonardo da Vinci. Bernard Guerney's translation is the first complete and unabridged version in America. Random House presents it in a handsome new edition — illustrated with many sketches by da Vinci and a reproduction in color of his Head of Christ. A delightful book to read and to treasure.

AN IDEAL EASTER GIFT $5.00

★

THE ROCKWELL KENT

Moby Dick

Herman Melville's great whaling saga illustrated with over 200 drawings by Rockwell Kent. $3.50

★

A NONESUCH PRESS EDITION

Don Quixote

The Motteux translation illustrated by E. McKnight Kauffer
Bound in natural morocco. Two volumes. $42.00

★

AMERICAN FIRST EDITIONS

The Random House Prose Quartos

Six stories by
CONRAD AIKEN · SHERWOOD ANDERSON
STEPHEN VINCENT BENET · LOUIS BROMFIELD
THEODORE DREISER · CARL VAN VECHTEN
Each story bound in a separate folio, the six folios boxed in a special slip case, $10.00 the set.

★

THE SELECTED ESSAYS OF

William Hazlitt

Edited by Geoffrey Keynes.
Uniform with the Nonesuch "Blake" and "Donne." $3.50

★

Other Random House Books announced for 1931

THE TIME MACHINE by H. G. Wells
Designed by W. A. Dwiggins. 1200 copies for England and America. $12.50

WUTHERING HEIGHTS by Emily Bronte
With 12 wood engravings by Clare Leighton. 400 copies signed by Miss Leighton. $15

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE by Stephen Crane
Printed by the Grabhorn Press, and decorated in color by Valenti Angelo. 1000 copies. $15

GEORGE GERSHWIN
A collection of 16 songs by George Gershwin with illustrations in color by Ralph Barton. 300 copies $25

★

To your bookseller—To Random House, 20 East 57th Street, New York City

Please send me the current RANDOM HOUSE list and place my name on your mailing list to receive future announcements of Random House books.

Name_____

Address_____

Points of View

Book Reviewing

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

The article by Mr. James Truslow Adams on book reviewing in America indicates one important evil but omits another probably of equal significance. Those of us who have resigned ourselves to the honorarium that is our meager pay for a review have still another limitation to combat: the scant space that even the most liberal of editors is willing to give us. How is the reviewer to write a review that will be critical, informative, and exact when he is allowed only 500 to 800 words for a book? Is it any wonder that, when one is confined to 600 words in which to review, say, the collected poems of Edith Sitwell, one must either lapse into general statements that indicate an attitude for or against the poet without attempting to substantiate the position by concrete references; or become crabbed in the attempt to be specific by quoting stray lines that one hopes will indicate the critic's reasons for his judgment? In the reviewing of fiction, criticism, or biography the difficulties are similar. One almost never has space concretely to develop one's critical statements. The result is that most reviews consist of a brief summary and a terse statement that, if one had time, one would object to such and such a point, but "despite these minor deficiencies, the book is, *on the whole*, worth reading." Reviews that do not do even that, however, are more common, and consist of meaningless, because unsupported, adjectives; for these we have an undignified but very expressive term: the vulgar apocopation of the word crapulous.

Author, public, and reviewer are all harmed by this space limitation. The author receives nothing except flattery or blame: the flattery he may absorb, but the blame he usually cannot understand because the reviewer has not been exact in his criticism. The public that reads reviews is compelled to accept the general criticism of the reviewer without knowing upon what standards of scholarship or sensitivity his judgment is founded. And since even reviewers have been known to disagree, that part of the public that reads more than one review is often nonplussed by contradictory statements from various critics. Had the reviewer, however, had the space to develop his criticism by furnishing evidence for his opinion, the public might itself evaluate the evidence. At present the public is denied the privilege of forming its own standards because it seldom sees any critical canon in operation. As for the reviewer, he crams, compresses, counts syllables, and longs for the days of the British quarterlies, when the reviewer could advance his judgment with all the necessary support by quotation or reference and depend upon his readers to decide, if they desired or were capable, whether his argument was valid.

Incidentally, too, and with more definite pertinence to Mr. Adams, were the reviewer allowed more space, he would also receive higher pay.

New York. MORRIS U. SCHAPPES.

[Longing for the days of the British quarterlies is to long for the days of fewer books! We agree that in many instances the long review is the only just one, and try to arrange for such reviews whenever possible. However, we are unhappily impressed by the number of 800 word reviews that say in that space what with more careful writing could have been readily packed into 300 words.—The Editors.]

"The Bar Sinister"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

Mr. W. S. Hall in *Points of View* of January 24, 1931, in discussing the inexactness of the expression "the bar sinister" says he has a vague recollection of the use of that term as the title of a novel. Can I assist him by mentioning that some twenty-five years ago there appeared a delightful dog story by Richard Harding Davis under the title of "The Bar Sinister?"

Louisville, Ky. R. E. GRINSTEAD.

Anonymous Authors

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

Re. *Reluctant Reviewers* in issue of 10 inst. "Who hath not owned—the magic of a name?" Due to this books and reviews are too often judged by the name appended to them. Why not anonymous authors as well as reviewers?

E. K. CORMACK.

San Diego, Calif.

Anonymous Review

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

At least one of your readers was somewhat depressed by the implications contained in your recent editorial inviting approval of a policy of publishing book reviews anonymously.

Your conviction—based presumably on actual difficulties encountered in making up the *Saturday Review*—that only under the cloak of anonymity will competent critics in general submit their honest, mature opinions about the new books, is a shocking indictment of present-day intellectual America. If your estimate of the situation is correct, it means that there is no place in this country for a journal of literary criticism worthy of the name.

In these times when almost anyone can get a book published on any imaginable subject, and can depend on getting a favorable review somewhere, your magazine has seemed to me to perform a peculiarly valuable public service. Whether a reader is seeking diversion, or information, or orientation among current trends in fields apart from his own special preoccupation, he turns gratefully to a journal in which the commentaries on notable new books are signed by men and women whose competence—and whose bias—such reader has independent means of judging.

It is only to people possessing an intelligent interest in books, and, at least potentially, a critical appreciation of what contemporary writers are doing and trying to do, that a magazine of the caliber of the *Saturday Review of Literature* can appeal. To such readers a sequence of signed reviews expressing divergent opinions on certain aspects of important books is far more illuminating and stimulating than any number of editorially indorsed pronouncements written by depersonalized critics. (One cannot imagine following with rapt attention a spirited debate between Anonymous and Anonymous.)

I write not as one of the Inner Circle. But it is my firm belief that the intelligent portion of the American public is prone to suspect the intellectual integrity of a writer who is unwilling to assume responsibility by publishing his signature or some recognizable pen name. I find it difficult to regard as a trustworthy guide or faithful servant of truth any reviewer who is willing to publish deprecatory comments on a book provided his identity is withheld and not otherwise: whether his "timidity" be justified on the ground of soft-heartedness, or of stage-fright—not to mention other possibilities.

Conceivably, if they would mediate over a few of George Santayana's sentences (*Sat. Rev. of Lit.*, Vol. VII, No. 26, p. 534, the second column) your able but retiring critics might gain heart. If those reviewers whom you have in mind cannot even then resolve to allow us the benefit of their valuable opinions *in propria persona*, may one not hope that others equally gifted will come forward in time to relieve you of any lingering temptation to change the character of your magazine?

MARY ADA UNDERHILL.

Washington, D. C.

Why Not "Space and Time?"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review.*
SIR:

To Mr. Ficke's unforgettable sonnet, "Absolution," in your issue of December 20, the pagan heart of man would say a fervent amen. But why, in the sixth line ("No guilt of yours with time and space conspired"), did he not use the words "time" and "space" in reverse order?

New York. DE WITT C. WING.

"The Pot of Caviar"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

In your issue of today I find a letter from Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt, asking for help in locating a story of the Boxer Rebellion, in which an old scientist poisons his white guests at a banquet rather than have them fall into the hands of the Boxers.

This story occurs in one of two books by Arthur Conan Doyle, both of which made a vivid impression on me when I first read them, but are a little mixed in my mind now. It occurs in "Round the Fire Stories,"* which was published by Doubleday in 1908, and is now out of print. The name of the particular story in question is, I think, "The Pot of Caviar."

New York City. HERBERT MCANENY

*This story is contained in Helen Ferris's anthology, "Adventure Waits."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Belles Lettres

EIGHT VICTORIAN POETS. By *F. L. Lucas.* Cambridge University Press (Macmillan). $1.80.

SELECTIONS FROM THE BRIEF MENTION OF BASIL LANNEAU GILDERSLEEVE. Edited by *Charles William Emil Miller.* Johns Hopkins Press. $4.50.

COLLECTED ESSAYS, PAPERS, ETC. OF ROBERT BRIDGES V. *George Darley.* Oxford University Press. $1.

Biography

J. C. PENNY. As told to *Robert W. Bruese.* Harpers. $3.

WOMEN HAVE BEEN KIND. By *Lou Tellegen.* Vanguard. $3.

REBECCA NURSE. By *Charles Sutherland Tapley.* Jones. $1.50.

WILLIAM HENRY WELCH AT EIGHTY. Edited by *Victor O. Freeburg.* New York: Milbank Memorial Fund.

A SOLDIER'S DIARY. By *Captain Will Judy.* Chicago: Judy Publishing Co. $2.

COW COUNTRY. By *Will James.* Scribners. $1.75.

COWBOY NORTH AND SOUTH. By *Will James.* Scribners. $1.75.

THE DRIFTING COWBOY. By *Will James.* Scribners. $1.75.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER: the Man and His Work. By *John Dickinson Regester.* Abingdon. $1.50.

PIERRE CHARLES ROY. By *Elliot H. Polinger.* New York: Institute of French Studies.

PETER CARTRIGHT: Pioneer. By *Helen Hardie Grant.* Abingdon. $2.

Fiction

MARTIN MAKE-BELIEVE. By GILBERT FRANKAU. Harper. 1931. $2.50.

Mr. Gilbert Frankau is known for novels of strong passions, reckless hunting, and a background of upper-class life in England. In this book the fences are as high as ever, the horses as good, and the people as worldly, but Mr. Frankau has to strain himself badly for circumstances to justify the strong passions. He opens with one dilemma involving moral distinctions without differences that are so dear to certain novelists. His hero, while an officer in the trenches, finds out that his wife has given herself to his colonel, the discovery being made by means of an entirely unnecessary compromising letter. The hero then takes a pistol and prepares to shoot his faithless commander, but at the instant that his finger is squeezing the trigger, their dug-out is caved in by a shell, and the colonel is killed. Thenceforth he is tortured by the question of whether he actually fired and killed the other, or whether he was prevented by the shell from being a murderer in the detail of actual fact. The author then sets further obstacles in the course of true love by making the hero's father squander his fortune on women, and the hero's son, while a boy at Eton (curiously disguised as "Downchester"), drown in trying to rescue a girl from the river. This last incident, incredible as it seems, makes a confirmed woman-hater of the hero, and provides another problem.

On this basis is reared a story as improbable as one would suppose. The solution to the first difficulty is provided by involving the hero, quite innocently, in a fraudulent company, and sending him to jail for six months. He there decides that since he did not deserve this sentence, he will set it off against the chance that he succeeded in his intended murder, and will write off his guilt. The background, in the English hunting country, is well done, but the essentials of the story need only to be stated baldly to appear ridiculously artificial.

THE RAKE AND THE HUSSY. By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS. Appleton. 1930.

Give a good cook the most unsubstantial and commonplace materials, plenty of sugar and applesauce, and he can make an excellent dessert. Chambers is a skilful writer, who appears to have set himself the task of writing a book calculated to delight the hearts of flappers and the flapper-minded, and to minister to the same appetites that indulge in Eskimo pies and nut sundaes.

That "The Rake and the Hussy" is extremely well-written will escape those who will enjoy it most. They will call it a "swell" book. The hero, an American in the England of 1812, must have been a great joy to the Englishmen, even those he shot in his very English duels. The heroine is all "slenderness," "half-opened lips," "immature" but "firm bosomed," and all that sort of thing, together with a combination of imbecile trustfulness, childlike morality, passionate depth, courage, and shrewdness in a tight place which should make her a psychological problem of great importance. The reader can foresee everything that is going to happen and is never disappointed, though to the hero and heroine all is surprising. Throughout, the most naive reader can never be worried.

Really the worst feature of the book is that it is so well written.

THE FIGHTING LIVINGSTONS. By LEONARD H. NASON. Doubleday, Doran. 1931. $2.

Mr. Nason's new war novel—it is a shade inferior to several of his earlier performances—recounts the adventures at home and in France of two soldier brothers, Rupert and John Livingston, sons of a Yankee fighting line, who, when their country enters the world conflict, are students at a Vermont military college. As the elder, Rupert, deems it his duty (at the college he is senior honor man and cadet major) to at once join the colors, and enrolls at Plattsburg, while John is required to bide at home to help their widowed mother in managing her horse-breeding farm. But John's martial spirit rebels, and before the draft selects him, he enlists as a private in the regular army, soon after being sent over seas with an outfit destined for immediate service at the front. Meantime, at Plattsburg, Rupert is commissioned an artillery lieutenant, but thereafter for many months he is transferred from one national army training base to another until, in the closing months of the war, he finally embarks for France. Promoted to a captaincy, his thirst for action still unsatisfied, assigned to duty as a Remount officer far from the battle lines, Rupert takes advantage of ten days leave to assume the identity of a missing private and worm his way unchallenged to the front. His exploits in the crucial last days of the war, when he gathers up a flock of casuals and forms them into a platoon, with himself the self-appointed commander, provide the best passages of the story, but these, alas, are deferred until near the end of the book, and much which precedes them is over-familiar, rather tame, and obvious war stuff.

ALL SMOKE. By FERDINAND MCFADYEN. Richard R. Smith. 1930.

Mr. McFadyen writes with a fine, honest spirit; he has observed human nature unsentimentally and from enough of a distance to gain sound perspective. His novel might have been easier to read if it had a less complicated plot and if he had been content with fewer characters. But even as it stands, the novel is superior to the general run of fiction. The scene, industrial Scotland, is always genuine; the commonplace people are drawn sharply and convincingly, yet not without sympathy. We have the feeling, from beginning to end, that this is real life as it is lived by many, and we are grateful for the truth that we sense.

To indicate the course of the plot is to give an unjust and an unfavorable notion of the novel. Primarily, it is the story of George Wood, who, within a few months, loses mother, father, stepfather, and sweetheart; the point being that he does not also lose his fundamental courage or desire for life. Yet the novel is not merely the chronicle of George's tragic losses; it is also, for example, the story of his mother, an oddly self-centered woman, who, in Mr. McFadyen's hands, becomes an unforgettable character. It is also the story of poor, blundering Tewkes, the stepfather, a most appealing, though certainly a worthless, fellow. So it goes in "All Smoke": an overloaded narrative, yet a notably honest and persuasive novel. Mr. McFayden has his roots in rich soil, and he can write.

THE CAST-IRON DUKE. By STEPHEN MCKENNA. Dodd, Mead. 1931. $2.50.

This is a readable but not memorable novel. The title figure, one of the last surviving exponents of the grand manner, is a nobleman who keeps up a state which in some of its customs is mid-Victorian, in some dates from the Regency, and in some is early medieval. The duke himself is between eighty and ninety, but from his habits of speech he might have been born in the same year as Palmerston or Lord John Russell. The duke's conception of the proper mode of life for a gentleman includes a prodigious amount of debauchery, in the manner of "Life in London" or other books of the dissipated eighteen thirties, and this leads to the first opposition he has ever encountered in his life; his granddaughter-in-law objects to his influence over his little great-grandsons, and insists upon educating them according to her own views. The plot is provided by the clash of wills between the old man and the young woman, aided by the tutor she has procured for the boys, to whom she also turns for consolation for the dissipation of her husband. It may be remarked in passing that in Mr. McKenna's last two novels he has given us settings of conspicuous gentility, and heroes who are either conspicuously not gentlemen, or, if they involve themselves in their difficulties innocently, are hopeless fools. In "The Redemption of Morley Darville" one was not quite sure what Mr. McKenna himself thought of his hero, but in "The Cast-Iron Duke" he seems to approve entirely of the tutor.

The characters are, if rather unreal, at least good, thorough-going melodramatic puppets. The background, for which the author has amassed an extraordinary number of picturesque observances that are, or were, maintained by great English families, is genuinely interesting. The book is competently written, and will pass an evening more pleasantly than most.

(*Continued on next page*)

NEW AND NOTABLE SCRIBNER BOOKS

Light-Horse Harry Lee

by Thomas Boyd

author of "Mad Anthony Wayne," etc.

A new biography of one of the most brilliant figures of the American Revolution: the dashing cavalry leader who helped free the South of Tarleton's redcoats: author of "first in war, first in peace...": father of Robert E. Lee: and, at last, a broken and penniless exile. Mr. Boyd writes of Lee's military exploits in the vivid style that distinguished his "Through the Wheat." More than that, he presents a dramatic study of a checkered career, and a realistic picture of the times.

Illustrated. $3.50

Atlantic Circle

Around the Ocean with the Winds and Tides

by Leonard Outhwaite

Adventures on sea and land fill the pages of this story of the 14,000-mile voyage of a small schooner. There are struggles with wild storms, hairbreadth escapes from shipwreck, glowing pictures of sunny seas, and interesting descriptions of ports and places in four continents, including a thrilling account of a volcanic eruption viewed from perilously close quarters. Besides its narrative appeal this book will be of special value to the yachtsman and small-boat navigator.

Profusely illustrated from photographs. $3.50

Men of Conviction

by Henry Bradford Washburn

Dean of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge

Six famous figures of the past whose spiritual experiences will help men and women to meet the baffling problems of life to-day. Dean Washburn discusses the lives, times, and purposes of Athanasius, Benedict, Hildebrand, St. Francis, Ignatius Loyola, and Pius IX. The book is an inspiring portrayal of men whose spiritual experiences changed not only their lives, but their world.

$2.50

The Grass Roof

by Younghill Kang

The life story of a young Korean, notable for its charming description of boyhood days in a lovely Korean valley, the tragic drama of the fall of the Hermit Kingdom and Japanese domination, and the stirring depiction of a young man's tussle with reality—a story overflowing with poetic beauty, humor, and convincingly real pictures of Oriental life.

$3.00

AT YOUR BOOKSTORE

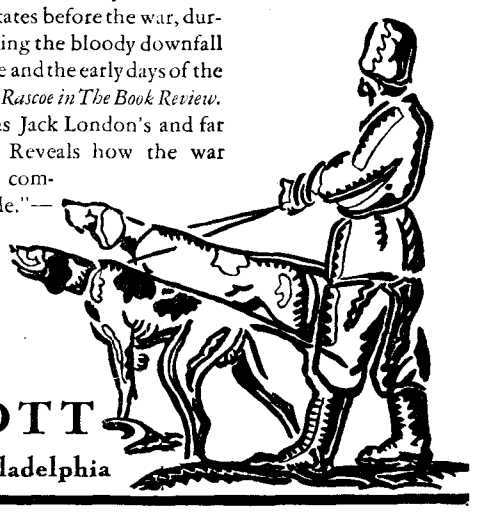
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK

THE DOGS

"Since our last session, the work of fiction I have found most agreeable to my taste is 'THE DOGS' by Ivan Nazhivin. This Nazhivin has a crackerjack story to tell and it is a story of Russian life on the great estates before the war, during the war, and during the bloody downfall of the Czaristic régime and the early days of the revolution."—*Burton Rascoe in The Book Review.*

"A story as virile as Jack London's and far more sophisticated. Reveals how the war was regarded by the common Russian people."—*Scribners.* $2.50

By IVAN NAZHIVIN



LIPPINCOTT

Washington Square, Philadelphia

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

Books Briefly Described

TRAVELLER'S LUCK. By E. V. LUCAS. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1931. $2.

A collection of Mr. Lucas's essays not hitherto brought together. Various in theme and written with the well known charm of his skilful pen.

WORDSWORTH. By C. H. HERFORD. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1931. $2.

Professor Herford, an authority on Wordsworth and author of "The Age of Wordsworth," has taken advantage of the new materials recently discovered in Wordsworth's life to write in brief compass a new critical biography.

THE INTERNATIONAL CITY OF TANGIER. By GRAHAM H. STUART. California: Stanford University Press. 1931. $4.

A contribution to the problem of the international management which has resulted from the settlement of the Treaty of Versailles. The book is a careful study of the organization and control of Tangier with an elaborate bibliography and appendix.

THE JUNIUS MANUSCRIPT. Edited by GEORGE PHILIP KRAPP. New York: Columbia University Press. 1931. $4.

The Junius Manuscript contains the Biblical Poems once attributed to Cædmon but now supposed to represent at the most reworkings or imitations of his earlier poems. This eleventh century manuscript with elaborate annotation is here printed in a definitive edition.

THE NOVEL IN ENGLISH. By GRANT C. KNIGHT. New York: Richard R. Smith. 1931. $3.

A survey of the English and American novel from the 18th century on, with a few pages of preliminaries, divided into chapters with a selected bibliography for each. Written with judgment, and a useful book for a quick survey.

POMPILIA AND HER POET. By HARRIET GAYLORD. New York: Literary Publications. 1931.

Miss Gaylord's book retells the story of "The Ring and the Book" and the story of the Browning courtship. It is addressed to readers who do not know the Brownings and for whom the lives and works of these poets must be simplified, sweetened, and edged with rosemary. It is only just to add that a book which under no circumstances could have possessed real value has profited rather than lost by its allocation to Miss Gaylord.

THE BOOK OF THE JOURNEYMAN: Essays from *The New Freeman* by ALBERT JAY NOCK. New York: The New Freeman. 1930. $1.50.

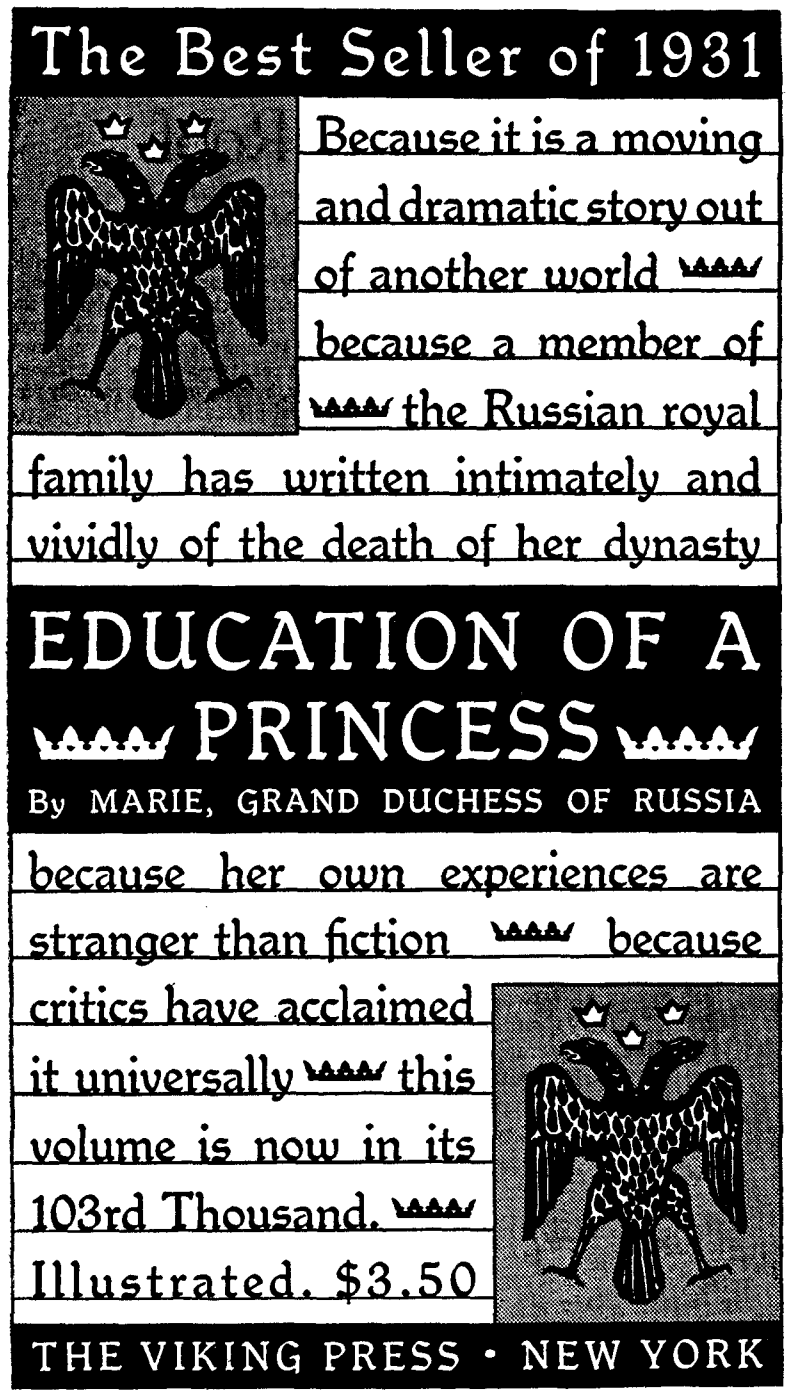
Spirited editorial essays covering a wide field of comment upon contemporary life. Selected from Mr. Nock's contributions to the *New Freeman*.

MY LIFE STORY: From Archduke to Grocer. By the EX-ARCHDUKE LEOPOLD. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1931.

The rather gossipy love story of the Ex-Archduke Leopold of Tuscany who tells of his misfortunes due to difficulties with Francis Joseph and his picaresque adventures on his way to becoming a member of the working class. This, unlike most recent books by ci-devant nobility, is not a war book, most of its incidents happening before 1914. For a while the Archduke lived naked out-of-doors as a vegetarian, and, accused of madness himself, married an intermittently mad wife.

FOUR CENTS AN ACRE: The Story of Louisiana under the French. By GEORGES OUDARD. New York: Brewer & Warren. 1931. $3.50.

A translation by Margery Bianco of this readable narrative of the French in America. The early part of the book has to do with first discoveries and settlements on the St. Lawrence and in the West, as background for the story of Spanish and French Louisiana. A full biography is included, but the book is written for the general reader.


The Best Seller of 1931
Because it is a moving and dramatic story out of another world
because a member of the Russian royal family has written intimately and vividly of the death of her dynasty
EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS
By MARIE, GRAND DUCHESS OF RUSSIA
because her own experiences are stranger than fiction because critics have acclaimed it universally this volume is now in its 103rd Thousand.
Illustrated. $3.50
THE VIKING PRESS • NEW YORK

The Reader's Guide

By MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER c/o *The Saturday Review*

S. T. T., Chickasha, Okla., says: Your report on the doctor in fiction interested me; some such treatment of genealogy in novels would be valuable to lineage fans. A list of fiction giving the history of a family for several generations would include Galsworthy's "The Forsyte Saga" (Scribner), Sigrid Undset's "Kristin Lavransdatter" (Knopf), Rolland's "Jean Christophe" (Holt), Glenway Wescott's "The Grandmothers" (Harper), Bess Streeter Aldrich's "A Lantern in her Hand" (Appleton), on down to Selma Lagerlöf's "The Ring of the Lowenskölds" (Doubleday, Doran), Elizabeth Madox Roberts's "The Great Meadow" (Viking), "The Limestone Tree" and "Lacemaker Lekholm."

IT takes three generations to live out one life: most of us are somebody's second chance. This is one reason why the novel, whose peculiar province is development of character, can do what no play, concerned as it is only with catastrophe, can so well accomplish. A really good play starts just as the snow is loosening to fall off the roof: a really great novel can begin when the first autumnal wind presages snow.

"Buddenbrooks" (Knopf) remains not only the masterpiece of Thomas Mann but the best North German representative of a type of fiction for which "The Forsyte Saga" has been accepted as the English standard of measurement. The Jewish family novel is represented by G. B. Stern's "The Matriarch" (Knopf) and its continuation, "A Deputy was King," and by Bloch's ". . . and Company" (Viking). In the year of the "Matriarch's" appearance I told Miss Stern the book was easier reading than her own favorite family novel, "Buddenbrooks," because in that everyone runs steadily down hill and dies, while it took a general landslide to carry off the Matriarch at a great old age. "Whisper" she replied, "she isn't dead yet; she's my own grandmother and she'll bury us all."

The finest family novel from Holland—where this type of fiction flourishes—is the four-volume "Book of the Small Souls," by Louis Couperus (Dodd, Mead). I rather wonder why this chronicle of an upper-class, over-civilized, decadent Dutch family is not more written about, read and re-read as it continues to be by the judicious all over the world: they seem content to savor its merits for themselves without trying to bring the crowd into their enjoyment. "The Rebel Generation," by Jo Ammers-Kuller (Dutton), is another Dutch novel of this *genre*; the trick in the title is that each of its three generations is in a state of rebellion. Rose Macaulay's "Dangerous Ages" (Liveright) shows three successive age-layers of danger, with a fourth reaching peace somewhere in the eighth decade; its heredity is sound, which is more than one can say for most Victorian novels. Indeed, this in itself apart from her opinions, would place Miss Macaulay with her own generation, in the generations preceding a girl in a book did not need to be at all like her mother. It would be interesting to see how many of Dickens's young people show spiritual or mental signs of being related to either of their parents; so far as I know, Sam Weller is the only one. One must, of course, make exception of Jane Austen, whose pre-Victorian bright eye caught everything including family traits, so that, for instance, one has but to compare the two daughters of Mr. Woodhouse, Emma and Isabella in "Emma," with their father to get an idea of what their mother must have been like. For that matter, the figure of the long-deceased Mrs. Barrett makes a sudden startling, unseen appearance on the stage of "The Barretts of Wimpole Street" in the last act of Mr. Besier's play—fortunately now to be read in book form (Little, Brown), for this is beyond question the best modern play to be added to this lineage-family-list.

"The Girls," by Edna Ferber (Doubleday, Doran), covers three generations of Chicago, of which two generations appear in Margaret Ayer Barnes's "Years of Grace" (*Houghton Mifflin*); "His Family," by Ernest Poole (Macmillan), seems to me the best modern New York novel for the generations spanning comparatively recent changes in life here, and for the earlier days of the metropolis nothing touches H. C. Bunner's "Story of a New York House" (*Scribner*). Some of our best American novels of this sort are already named in the inquiry; to the Scandinavian entries may be added Nexö's "Pelle the Conqueror" (Holt), which carries a Danish workman's family from the farm to the city in two generations, and Hamsun's "Growth of the Soil" (Knopf) whose hero is certainly patriarchal. Reymont's "The Peasants" (Knopf) carries over, though with less success, into "The Promised Land" (Knopf).

Several of the new American novels have a three generation range: Inez Haynes Irwin's "Family Circle" (Bobbs-Merrill), though its parts take place in 1900-1910-1920 with an epilogue in 1930, refers back to ancestors and concludes with the invisible presence of the family spirit, who has been keeping all this going for his own inscrutable purposes as family spirits do. "These Lords' Descendants," by Gloria Goddard (Stokes), runs from colonial days to the present, with so many characters I had hard work to keep them straight. Now Hergesheimer's "Three Black Pennys" (Knopf) gives you fewer people, with inescapable traits, and you know in each case where they got them, while surely Edna Ferber's "Show Boat" (Doubleday, Doran) accounted for the present—at least in a measure—by the past.

"Hardware," by Edward McKenna (McBride), is the story of three generations of saloon keepers in South Brooklyn and their relations to politics. I just recommended it to *I. W., New York City*, who asked for information on the saloon keeper and his rise in the United States as a political factor, and beyond telling her to consult the Anti-Saloon League and to read the records of Mr. Dooley, the Sage of Archey Road, and the admirable study of the League in Peter Odegard's "Pressure Politics" (Columbia University Press), that is all I have told her; I would be glad of further titles from readers.

T. M. R., Cadiz, Ohio, read in 1916-17 *a series of books by someone named Sedgwick or something like that, of which only a strong sense of gratitude to the author and a memory of delightful people, remains in the memory. I am asked for author and titles, with a review to their recovery.*

THIS is not the first time some grateful reader has testified in this column, though not often so indirectly, to the charm of Ethel Sidgwick, for there can be but little doubt that these books were hers. "Le Gentleman," "Herself," "A Lady of Leisure," "Promise" and its continuation, "Succession," "Duke Jones," and "Accolade," were all published in this country before 1917 by Small, Maynard, who also brought out "Jamesie," "Madame," and "Laura." The charm in question, like all true charm, defies definition; one can but say that she will be long remembered by an audience more important than extensive, with the sort of gratitude one gives to a personal friend. Her latest novel, "When I Grow Rich" (Harper), came out last year; it is a young-hearted story of young people in literary and artistic London, and part of it takes place just around the corner from the Summer White House of the Reader's Guide.

Speaking of charm, by this quality Anne Greene, in "Reader, I Married Him" (Dutton), kept me chuckling my way through what will turn out on sober second reading, to be inside information on the dark subject of why some ladies marry at all. In the course of this novel, which sounds as if the author had had so much fun writing it that she did not care if anyone read it, and is in consequence being read by everyone who knows a good story, mention is made of "The Green Graves of Balgowrie"—another example, in a precisely different manner, of the sort of charm that keeps a book alive. It so happens that in the week when Miss Greene's novel appeared the new, ninth English edition of Mary Findlater's "The Green Graves of Balgowrie" (Norwich, The Walpole Press, 36 Elm Street) reached me. It was first published thirty-five years ago and one might think, from the title, that it was quite out of touch with contemporary taste—but one reads it with the same sort of tenderness one gives to "Cranford," to certain parts of "Evelina" and "Persuasion," or to "Marie Chapdelaine," and gets from it that sense of personal gratitude of which I have spoken. I speak with more power because I did not read it when it came out and I was young; I came upon it first in this ninth new edition, without the glamour of association; I took it cold, and yet it was warm and living.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Compleat Collector.

RARE BOOKS · FIRST EDITIONS · FINE TYPOGRAPHY

Conducted by Carl Purington Rollins & Gilbert M. Troxell.

"Now cheaply bought for thrice their weight in gold."

Printer or Bibliographer

INCUNABULA AND AMERICANA 1450-1800. A Key to Bibliographical Study. By MARGARET B. STILLWELL. New York: Columbia University Press. 1931. $12.

MISS STILLWELL, the librarian of the Annmary Brown Memorial at Providence, Rhode Island, has prepared a bibliographical manual which will be of much use to the student and the casual practitioner, and of value as a book of reference to the more advanced bibliographer. I can hardly be called the former, and I am certainly not the latter; but as a printer and a student of printing the book will be decidedly worth while to me. I should not presume to review it as one intimately cognizant of its field (or fields), but a few random observations on it as a book and as a tool may be in order.

So much of the history of printing as is given in Miss Stillwell's book is accurate and simply expressed. This may seem supercilious criticism of a very capable and learned scholar, but the fact is that writers on printing fall into small errors of fact,—are so given, in Kipling's phrase, to "mishandling technicalities,"—that one opens a new book bearing on the subject with some concern. I have detected no unwarranted assumptions or inaccuracies of statement in the sections dealing with the early practice of the art.

There does seem to me, however, a somewhat exiguous connection between the three main divisions of the book: Incunabula, Americana, and Reference Sections, resulting, for one thing, in some overlapping of information. However, there is so much of value in the book that this point should not be stressed.

It is the last section which possesses the most value for a printer. There are, for instance, valuable tables of binding terms, foreign bibliographical terms (English, French, German, and Spanish) with an ingenious and usable index incorporated in the table, place names of fifteenth century printing towns, including the Latin originals, with the forms used in the British Museum, the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, and modern vernacular, and the present country or province, and finally an extended bibliography of incunabula and Americana. These lists are on the whole convenient and well arranged.

To the latter point one exception must be made, due to the printer, one must surmise, and not to the author. The bibliographical lists are set in type which is too large, and the heads are obscure. A much more concise arrangement, with smaller type, would have made a much more convenient book; for it is probable that such information is better displayed in as short a compass as possible. The ample spacing and leading, the poorly displayed sub-heads, and the lack of indication in the page running heads of the contents of each page make it extremely difficult to know where one is at in referring to the different classifications. I should have preferred to see this portion of the book set in double column, with more differentiation in the type employed for heads and sub-heads.

The type-face — monotype Caslon — and the paper are good; the ease with which the book lies open, due to the grain of the paper running the right way, and the texture and weight of the paper, are just what such a book should show. There is plenty of margin for the necessary and desirable annotations of the reader. The binding is in stout cloth. The index is thoroughly good: full and well set, making for easy reference. I should prefer a reference book to have its edges trimmed, but inasmuch as the top *is* cut and gilded, fingering is easy.

As an amateur dabbler in bibliographical matters I am glad to have such a book at hand for easy reference, because Miss Stillwell's knowledge of her subject makes it a book which can be relied upon. R.

THE most delirious note in recent book advertising is the western bookseller's advice to his clerks to urge the customer to buy a certain biography of a famous general because of the *opportunity of owning a first edition which undoubtedly will be valuable sometime*. Since an extremely active campaign is afoot to boost the pre-publication sales of this book, already advertised by its serialization, to the utmost, a first edition of anywhere from ten to a hundred thousand copies may be looked for. The possibility of the book increasing in value is about as remote as the probability of an increase in the value of those numerous lives of General Grant or President McKinley with which diligent book agents flooded the country.

There has been altogether too much of this suggestion of future increase in value, in the selling of even limited editions. Whether a book will become scarce and desirable can only be determined by time; neither the enthusiasm of publishers and dealers, nor the current auction sales, nor the number of copies printed has the slightest bearing on the matter of future values. Take, for instance, the books of the eighteenth century. In many ways the most attractively printed books we have, graceful, inviting to read, often full of wit and shrewd observation, frequently racy enough for the modern palate; they are to be found in every bookseller's shelves at almost less than nominal prices. I have bought them two for a quarter many times.

It takes something besides a little handmade paper, the latest type face, and skill at commercial exploitation, to give a book lasting or future value. And when the price is inflated by innumerable dealers' discounts, the decline of values is likely to be drastic. R.

English Dealers' Catalogues

Birrell & Garnett (30, Gerrard Street, London, W.1).

Catalogue 30—Libri Scientifici prostant venales. Learned, well annotated, and interesting. The illustrations are examples of early art in its most awkward form.

Catalogue 31—Early Newspapers. These extend from the *Mercurius Academicus*, the *Mercurius Britanicus*, and the *Mercurius Veridicus* of 1645 to the *British Controversialist* of 1852-1853.

F. C. Carter (17, Middle Lane, Hornsey, London, N.8).

Catalogue 75—Books of all kinds, arranged by subject only. A delightful catalogue for persons who enjoy going over books on the shelves of libraries.

George Gregory Bookstore (8, Green Street, Bath).

Catalogue 301—Intelligent and conservative.

Edwin S. Gorham
Inc.
ESTABLISHED 1900
Publishers, Booksellers, distributors of Religious Literature and Art, also Religious Easter Cards, Bibles, Prayer Books and Hymnals. Prompt attention given to mail orders.
18 West 45th Street, N.Y.

Counter Attractions

NEW & OLD BOOKS :: COLLECTORS' ITEMS :: STAMPS & PRINTS :: LITERARY SERVICES

BARGAIN OFFERS

WE SPECIALIZE IN CURIOUS BOOKS; privately printed items in limited editions; unexpurgated translations; unusually illustrated volumes. Join our select clientele. Catalogues on request. The Falstaff Press, Dept. S, 489 Fifth Avenue, New York.

FREE: BOOKS OF THE MONTH Book Bazaar, 1740 52nd Street, Brooklyn.

BACK NUMBERS

BACK NUMBERS OF MAGAZINES at Abraham's Bookstore. 141 Fourth Avenue, New York.

BOOK BINDING

EXPERT HAND BOOKBINDING and Casemaking for First Editions or Autographs, Exclusive Best Imported Materials, Restoration and all forms of Scientific Book Reclamation. Period Modernist and Conventional Designs. Prices on request. Bennett Book Studios, Inc., 240 West 23rd Street, New York City.

BOOK PLATES

COPPER PLATE STYLE $4 to $5 per hundred. Send 10 cents for sample. Frank E. Bittner, 251 High Street, Nutley, N. J.

FIRST EDITIONS

FIRST EDITIONS. IF INTERESTED in Dickens, write for list. We have many items of Dickensiana. Let us know what you want. PEGASUS BOOK SHOP, 31 East 60th Street, New York City.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI — ADELAIDE Crapsey—Emily Dickinson—Louise Guiney are suggested by The Walden Book Shop. 546 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, as distinguished poets whose first editions are collectors' items. Catalogues on request.

FIRST EDITIONS

WAKEMAN LIBRARY CATALOGUE Comprising the Works of BRYANT, EMERSON, HAWTHORNE, HOLMES, LONGFELLOW, LOWELL, POE, THOREAU, WHITTIER. Describe 1,280 titles, numerous facsimiles with auction prices to each item (1914). 256 pages. Cloth, $6.00. McCutcheon Library Catalogue Comprising the Works of DICKENS, THACKERAY, HARDY, KIPLING, STEVENSON. Describes 1,318 titles, numerous facsimiles, with auction prices to each item (1925). 320 pages. Cloth, $6.00. These Catalogues are the most useful Bibliographies of the respective Authors and they are Indispensable to Collectors Dealers and Librarians. Supply limited. Order from G. A. BAKER & CO., 480 Lexington Avenue, New York.

SCHULTE'S BOOKSTORE. Catalogues of first editions, Americana, library sets and religious books mailed free. Schulte's Bookstore, 80 Fourth Avenue, New York.

CATALOGUE READY FIRST Editions interesting books. Julian G. Treilhard, 1039 Green Street, San Francisco.

FRENCH BOOKS

FRENCH BOOKS, OVER 500,000 in Stock. Lowest prices. Mail orders information prompt. New 1931 Catalogue 20 cents (stamps). The French Bookshop, 556 Madison Avenue at 56th Street. "New York's Largest French Bookshop."

VISIT OR WRITE THE FRENCH BOOKMAN, 202 West 96th Street, New York. Catalogue, 5 cents (stamps).

GENERAL

ODD CURIOS, unusual and extraordinary Books and Autographs. Write for catalogue. State your own interests. Union Square Bookshop, 30 East 14th Street, New York.

GENERAL

YOUR COAT OF ARMS correctly and handsomely executed in water color. Authentic work guaranteed. William Stanley Hall, 132 Lexington Avenue, New York.

LITERARY SERVICES

MANUSCRIPTS ANALIZED, criticized, revised, prepared for publication, marketed. Book manuscripts a specialty. Twenty-five years' experience as writer, editor, publisher. Helpful text-books. Catalogue. James Knapp Reeve and Agnes M. Reeve, Box A, Franklin, Ohio.

STORY IDEAS FOR PHOTOPLAYS, talking pictures, magazines. Accepted any form for revision, development, copyright, and submission to markets. Established 1917. Free booklet gives full particulars. Universal Scenario Company, 411 Meyer Bldg., Western & Sierra Vista, Hollywood, Calif.

MATHILDE WEIL, LITERARY agent. Books, short stories, articles and verse criticized and marketed. Special department for plays and motion pictures. The Writers' Workshop, Inc., 133 East Fifty-eighth Street, New York City.

YOUR MANUSCRIPT SHOULD BE sold! This office sells plays, novels, short stories, published books or produced plays for motion pictures. International connections. Publications planned. Editor, literary advisor. Grace Aird, Inc., 551 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

WRITERS—SEND AT ONCE FOR FREE booklet HOW TO WRITE FOR THE TALKIES without obligation. DANIEL O'MALLEY CO., INC., SUITE U, 1776 Broadway, New York.

MANUSCRIPT TYPING

MANUSCRIPTS EDITED AND TYPED. Prompt and expert service guaranteed. By one who has had several years of experience in literary work. Manuscripts typed in accepted form for presentation to publishers. Reasonable rates: Straight typing 75c per thousand words including one carbon. Small additional charge for editing, depending upon the amount of work involved. For further information please write to Box Number 61, care of The Saturday Review of Literature.

OUT OF PRINT

OUT-OF-PRINT Books promptly supplied. National Bibliophile Service, 347 Fifth Avenue, New York.

PRINTING

BOOKS PRIVATELY PRINTED. Family Histories, Genealogies, Biographies. Exceptional facilities. Estimates given. WALTON BOOK COMPANY, 143 W. 41st Street, New York.

RARE BOOKS

JUST ISSUED. FIRST CATALOGUE of Americana, Indians, Colorado, Far West, etc. Many rare items; also contains unusual Lincolniana and Civil War. Reasonable prices. Fred A. Rosenstock, 406 15th, Denver, Colo.

UNIQUE CATALOGUE NO. 80, mainly books of English and American literature, free on request. Dauber & Pine Bookshops, Inc., 66 5th Ave., New York.

TYPOGRAPHY

PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS' BOOKS: Designed and made according to the finest principles. S. A. Jacobs, 3 Milligan Place, New York.

SCHEDULE OF RATES

ADVERTISING RATES for this classified page are as follows: for twenty consecutive insertions of any copy minimum twelve words, 7 cents a word; for any less number of insertions 10 cents a word. The forms close on Friday morning eight days before publication date. Address Department GH, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York, or telephone BRyant 9-0896.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from THE INNER SANCTUM *of*
SIMON *and* SCHUSTER
Publishers*, 386 Fourth Avenue, *New York

historian of mankind, painter on seven-league canvas, HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON, *of Westport and Holland*

It is a special privilege and a high honor to report in this column—thus scooping the literary critics, city editors, and WALTER WINCHELL—that HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON, internationally famous historian, philosopher, and artist, will henceforth be published by *The Inner Sanctum*.

The author of *The Story of Mankind* and *R. V. R.* has just sailed for the Island of Veere, in Holland, to complete another *magnum opus*, the nature of which is still a closely guarded Editorial Secret, even though the two official witnesses at the signing of the contract were DOROTHY PARKER and HAROLD ROSS, editor of *The New Yorker*

Meantime *The Inner Sanctum*, with pardonable pride, hails the newest author to adorn its list, and is delighted to introduce to its readers one of Nature's Noblemen—a scholar who has done much to animate and liberate the science and art of history, one who finds time, amid Herculean researches, to paint and sketch with astounding versatility, to satirize and enjoy the passing show, and even, on special occasions, to take down his violin and play BACH and HANDEL with and for

ESSANDESS.

And I Shall Make Music

by Bessie Lasky

"You're a lovely glutton for words. You collect them, you roll them about like bright marbles, you try to make them glisten for you and show colors."

—Fannie Hurst

$2.00

HORACE LIVERIGHT, Inc.
N. Y.

SEA LEGS

By OLIVER HERFORD

K is the Keel; and L is the Lurching... but read these giddy quatrains yourself, laugh at the excruciatingly funny Herford drawings! Just the book for a trip; and just as funny on land. For all who travel by water or by wine. $1.00

LIPPINCOTT
Washington Square Philadelphia

THE PHOENIX NEST

WE bade farewell to our friend Henry Williamson, author of "Tarka the Otter" and other remarkable animal stories (Dutton), with genuine regret. He is the type of Englishman who cements the best possible feeling between the two countries. A thorough artist, an unassuming gentleman, a person with one of the most lively senses of humor we have ever encountered, it was always a pleasure to see him twinkling across the room at some party or other. The night before he sailed he beat us very badly in a game of checkers and then *brow*beat us in American fashion as district attorney in a game of "Murder." He also nearly paralyzed us by seizing what looked like a full pint of Golden Wedding rye and downing it at one draught. It turned out to be coffee with which he had filled an empty bottle! Well, we are sure that everyone he has encountered in America wishes Henry Williamson "the best," and the best to his charming wife as well. We are more than sorry to lose them from our shores. . . .

We understand that "Theatre Street," the story of the beautiful Russian dancer, *Tamara Karsavina*, has turned out to be a best-seller for Dutton. There's another Dutton book that we ourself think is a knockout as a funny volume and that is "1066 and All That," by *R. J. Yeatman* and *W. C. Sellar*. However, we encountered one of the most serious setbacks of our career in regard to it. We started reading it aloud in a speakeasy to two beautiful young ladies, and neither one of them cracked a smile. We looked around and they were yawning. Just the same, for a' that and a' that, we think it's awfully funny. We insist also on quoting the following poem from it.

Whan Cnut Cyng the Witen wold enfeoff
Of infanthief and outfangthief
Wonderlich were they enwraged
And wordwar waged
Sware Cnut great scot and lot
Swingë wold ich this illbegotten lot.

Wroth was Cnut and wrothword spake.
Well wold he win at wopantake
Fain wold he brakë frith and cracke heads
And than they shold worshippe his redes.

Swingéd Cnut Cyng with swung sword
Howléd Witanë hellë but hearkened his word
Murië sang Cnut Cyng
Outfangthief is Damgudthyng. . . .

Which reminds us that in the new Spring issue of the *Yale Review*, *John Masefield* has a poem, "Adamas and Eva," for some strange reason written as though Masefield were *Chaucer*. It begins, "Whilom ther was, dwellyng in Paradys Our fader Adamas with Eve his wyf." Now we don't see the slightest reason for writing in that fashion save in the interests of clever imitation. Naturally the poem, challenging Chaucer exactly on his own ground, has hardly a whit of the robust Chaucerian savour. The style is so utterly unnatural to this age that the poem must necessarily lack all sincerity. It becomes simply a quaintness, a literary exercise. It is too bad that Masefield should waste his time upon it at this juncture. It is the kind of thing one might practise at in a youthful apprenticeship, not worth mature pains. . . .

Sir James Jeans, the famous astronomer, has now expanded his radio talks into a book, informally written, "The Stars in their Courses." He compares the solar system to Piccadilly Circus in London, with rotary traffic all going one way. But he says we must not think of the planets as taxicabs charging around the fountain in the center. If they were to be placed to scale with Piccadilly Circus, the sun would be a cherry stone in the middle and the planets tiny seeds or grains of sand. The book will be out over here in about four days, through the Macmillan Company. . . .

Brewer and Warren, Inc., has now changed its name to Brewer, Warren & Putnam, Inc., to signalize the permanent association of *George Palmer Putnam* with the firm. Mr. Putnam is specially responsible for a new book on exploration, viz: "Under the North Pole—The Wilkins-Ellsworth Submarine Expedition." When *Sir Hubert Wilkins* sets out in his submarine for the North Pole on May first, part of his cargo will be nineteen copies of the contributors' edition of this book, each copy of which cost $600. At the point nearest to the North Pole which the expedition reaches the books will be autographed by Sir Hubert and the other members of the party and then brought back to be returned to their owners. The money received for the books, over and above the publishing costs, will be devoted to the financing of the expedition. In the event that the *Nautilus*, for that is the name of the submarine, is damaged and the books are not brought back, each of the owners wil have five hundred dollars returned to him by the publishers. There is also a regular trade edition of the book and a fifty dollar limited edition. For this limited edition of five hundred a loose section of four pages for each volume will also be taken on the submarine and will contain a map on which the course day by day will be plotted and attested by Sir Hubert himself. On the *Nautilus's* return the loose sections will be forwarded to the registered purchasers of the books, to be bound into the volumes. . . .

The reminiscences of *Sir William Rothenstein*, the famous English artist, entitled "Men and Memories" (Coward-McCann), is well worth your buying if only for the illustrations, which are priceless. So are some of the anecdotes. Another grand book is "Savage Messiah," the story of *Gaudier* the sculptor, published by Alfred Knopf. Both these books you should absolutely not be without. . . .

The best book of criticism to appear in America since auld lang syne, head and shoulders above all others, is *Edmund Wilson's* "Axel's Garden" (Scribner). If we had any real interest in literature over here it would be a best-seller. Selah!

THE PHOENICIAN.

PLAGUED BY THE NIGHTINGALE
KAY BOYLE

This brilliant novel could only have been written by an American who has lived long and intimately in France. It is the story of an American girl, her French husband, and the wealthy and numerous family which encompasses and almost engulfs them. Don't miss it. You'll enjoy reading it and recommending it to your friends.
$2.50

The first review says:

"The originality of the writing of this novel goes beyond the mere creation of beautifully etched, crystal-clear scenes, every faint tone of satirical or cruel or lyric meaning accurately sounded. Her penetration of these scenes is in a mental life all her own—a proud, brilliant, sharp life of which Kay Boyle can make her readers an understanding part."—WILLIAM SOSKIN, *N.Y. Eve. Post.*

JONATHAN CAPE & HARRISON SMITH
139 East 46th Street
New York, N. Y.

The AMEN CORNER

"This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
. . . . . .
England, bound in with the triumphant sea—"[1]

2. Brass of Ralph, Lord Stafford, 1347. (*Elsyng, Norfolk.*)

All commentators on the history of England, whether "prophets new-inspired" or simply historians of the past, have said something about the influence of physical factors on the rough island story. One might imagine that these would be the chief consideration in a book entitled *The Evolution of England*. The author, Mr. James A. Williamson, gives them due weight, but does not neglect other factors in a stimulating book, which, as he says, "is not a systematic history of England, but rather a commentary on that history." He is careful not to reduce its evolution to a mere mechanical formula. He accords "full value to such cataclysmal factors as the achievements of exceptional men, the strokes of death cutting short work half done, the decision of doubtful battles, the effect of plagues, inspirations and enthusiasms, all that category of events which must be classed as providential or accidental and not subject to definable law."

The Oxonian does not remember to have read a book quite like it before—"it selects those transactions which best illuminate the central theme, the development of the English community and of the country it inhabits." There are ten "Periods": Roman Britain; The Saxon Settlement; The Feudal Age; The Decline of Feudalism; The Zenith and Decline of the English Monarchy; Revolution and Empire; The Eighteenth Century; The Great Rift; Reform and Wealth; The Last Half-Century. The title of the last chapter, "The Pace Quickens," opens up infinite vistas.

We can imagine nothing more fascinating and valuable than to take a reading course with *The Evolution of England* as a starting point. To begin with, there is *Mediæval England*,[2] a new edition of Barnard's Companion to English History, from which we could not resist showing you one of the 359 illustrations. Brasses, of course, remind us of the beautiful churches in which England is so rich. Unsuspected facts and new principles have been brought out by Mr. A. W. Clapham's *English Romanesque Architecture Before the Conquest*,[3] a beautiful book with 66 plates and 52 text figures. Other phases of England's earlier days are fascinatingly portrayed by Mr. L. F. Salzman in *English Life in the Middle Ages*, *English Industries in the Middle Ages*,[4] and a third volume of which the Oxonian has seen the proofs and illustrations ("lavish," we believe, is the adjective), *English Trade in the Middle Ages*.[5]

With the end of the Middle Ages came the Reformation (which in turn gave rise to Burnet's *History* in 7 volumes[6]), and then the Revolution, the Civil War, or the Rebellion—according to your political sympathies. We will call it the Rebellion on account of Clarendon's celebrated *History of the Rebellion*,[7] the proceeds from which, it is said, financed the expansion of the Oxford University Press in the 18th century and gave its name to the Clarendon Press. This period has been our favorite since infancy; and although the Oxonian is naturally on the side of the lost cause, we can heartily recommend to all boys and girls Clarence Stratton's stirring tale, *Robert the Roundhead*.[8]

But histories of wars, however interesting, have not so great a bearing on our present world as works like Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*[9] and Stubb's *Constitutional History of England*.[10] Indeed, only the other day the Oxford University Press published a new book by Mr. Arthur Berriedale Keith called *A Constitutional History of the First British Empire*,[11] which traces the constitutional development of each colony down to the loss of the American colonies. Which brings us back to Mr. Williamson, who has given the fairest brief statement of the causes of the American Revolution we remember to have seen.

THE OXONIAN.

Our Book of the Month: THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLAND, by JAMES A. WILLIAMSON. $6.00.

(1) "Richard II." Shakespeare's Works. 1 Vol. in the *Oxford Standard Authors*. $2.25. (2) $7.00. (3) $10.50. (4) $3.50 each. (5) Probable price. $4.50. (6) $21.00. (7) 6 vols. **$14.00.** (8) **$2.50. Illustrated by Henry C.** Pitz. (9) *World Classics*. 3 vols. (41, 48, 53) 80c. each. (10) 3 vols. $14.00. (11) $7.00.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED